

# THE **FOREIGN SERVICE** JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2016

## THE AIR WE BREATHE LIVING WITH AIR POLLUTION



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TRAVELS WITH **THE CHAMP**



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**CLEMENTS WORLDWIDE LIFE INSURANCE: A PRIORITY FOR FOREIGN SERVICE FAMILIES**

## Does Concern for Your Family's Future Keep You Up at Night?

This summer the U.S. State Department has released travel alerts for U.S. Citizens due to the risk of potential terrorist attacks throughout Europe, in addition to a series of alerts and warning across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. This emphasizes what Foreign Service officers already know – that there are inherent risks in every post. These concerns, however, do not keep Foreign Service officers from doing their jobs with passion and commitment. The possibility of the unthinkable occurring cannot be ignored – that a foreign service officer could lose their life in service to their country.

No one wants to plan for a premature loss of life, but it is necessary for peace of mind. Many fail to consider how their family would manage after such a loss: how would their standard of living be maintained, how would mortgage payments be afforded or education costs be paid? Every member of the diplomatic community must ensure they have an adequate and sufficient life insurance policy.

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<sup>1</sup>Source: LIMRA and Time.com. <sup>2</sup>Subject to meeting policy requirements. For policies under \$500,000. <sup>3</sup>Death all causes except in locations defined as "high-risk," which also require medical underwriting. Limits and restrictions apply. Subject to certain country restrictions. Coverage is excluded in the United States and Canada and their territories and possessions in addition to Iran, India, and North Korea.

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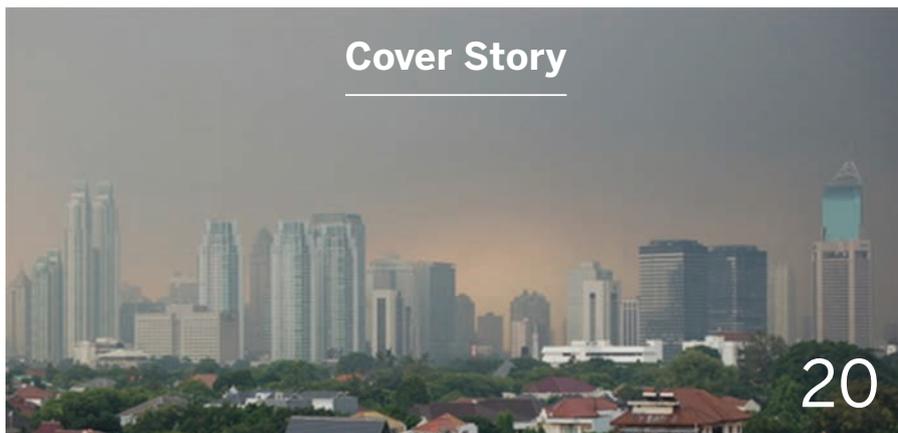
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<sup>1</sup>Source: LIMRA and Time.com. <sup>2</sup>Clements Worldwide Life Insurance policy issuance subject to meeting policy requirements. Death-all-causes except in locations defined as "high-risk" requires medical underwriting. Other limitations and conditions may apply. Per-day cost based on 39 year old, non-smoker with a \$140,000, 10-year fixed premium policy.

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On the Cover: An aerial view of chemical smog over Mexico City. Photo: Fidel Gonzalez/Wikimedia Commons.

# Forging Strategic Partnerships

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

As I write on Labor Day, the summer rotation cycle is behind us and, in our household and many of yours, a new school year is beginning. This seems like a great time to provide an update on the progress we have made over recent months establishing and cementing a series of strategic partnerships that form the foundation of AFSA's outreach efforts.

I know from conversations with members that many of us dream of earning the national recognition and respect our colleagues in the military enjoy. That remains a long-term goal for the Foreign Service, but we must work toward that goal with clear eyes.

Our numbers are small (just 16,500 active-duty FS, compared to well over a million active-duty uniformed military and another half-million reserves) and our financial resources are limited.

We generally spend more than two-thirds of our careers serving abroad, so ties to our home states grow tenuous; and we have nothing like the military's network of bases across the country to keep us connected.

If we are going to make serious progress toward our goal of having the Foreign Service widely recognized and respected,

we need friends and partners with deep roots in their communities to influence elected representatives. We are developing a comprehensive



Ambassador Barbara Stephenson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

## We are developing a comprehensive 50-state strategy to engage with the American public.

50-state strategy to engage with the American public, especially those prepared to vouch for the value of the Foreign Service, in every state.

AFSA has been working quietly and diligently over a number of months to forge strategic partnerships, so we can tap into nationwide networks to amplify the story of the Foreign Service to an ever-wider audience around the country. For example, following successful joint outreach with AFSA in 2015, Global Ties, which hosts international visitors across the country, has invited me to join its advisory board, connecting AFSA to its globally engaged members and affiliates in 45 states.

The World Affairs Councils of America, with local councils in 40 states, has given AFSA a prime speaking slot at its annual conference in November. And after a successful pilot year, the U.S. Institute of Peace signed on to partner with AFSA again on our signature high school essay contest.

AFSA has also secured much-needed—and much-appreciated—funding for additional outreach initiatives. During the last three months, AFSA signed agreements for funding in excess of \$85,000 to sustain outreach efforts.

Outreach is, of course, only one of the three pillars in the AFSA Governing Board's work plan, alongside *comprehensive workforce planning* to ensure you have a healthy career path to develop into the

leaders of tomorrow and *inreach* to help us gain a nuanced understanding of your aspirations and concerns.

Work continues on all three pillars. "Structured conversations" with members resume this month as we begin hearing from USAID and specialists at State, informing AFSA's advocacy work with both management and Congress. We hear you loud and clear, for example, on lateral entry, and we will continue to oppose efforts in Congress to parachute new entrants into State's already full mid-levels, even as we work constructively to address the staffing shortages at entry level.

In our mission to advocate for a strong Foreign Service, we've formed a strategic partnership with the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin to conduct a benchmarking exercise comparing the U.S. Foreign Service with eight of the largest, most influential diplomatic services in the world.

We aim to capture global best practices on recruiting, early assignment patterns, tour length and a number of other issues for the purpose of making recommendations to ensure the U.S. Foreign Service is equipped to lead America's foreign policy in the 21st century. Expect to hear more over the course of the next few months as AFSA's work with the LBJ School's 14 graduate students and two respected international affairs scholars and practitioners progresses. ■

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# Pollution and Politics

BY SHAWN DORMAN

This month's cover story looks at air pollution as a fact of life for members of the Foreign Service. Southeast Asian "haze" (aka smoke from land-clearing peat fires in Indonesia); vehicle and industrial emissions choking cities across India and China; smoke from wood- and coal-burning from Sarajevo to Gaborone—all contribute to a global problem experienced locally.

Worldwide availability doesn't make exceptions, at least not yet, based on air quality. In "The Air We Breathe: Living with Air Pollution," environmental psychologist and urban health expert Nicole Schaefer-McDaniel, also an FS family member, gives a lesson on what we need to know—from the risks involved and where to look for information to suggestions for coping.

If you've been in the Foreign Service for more than one assignment, chances are you have an air pollution story. I found Deborah Lynn's "Breathless in Jakarta—A Cautionary Tale" particularly compelling, as I'd had my own bout with air pollution challenges while serving there in the late 1990s (whooping cough, smoky flights).

In her story, Lynn describes her painful journey through Jakarta pollution to pneumonia to the difficult decision to curtail from a great assignment.

Moving on from air pollution to hot

## Worldwide availability doesn't make exceptions, at least not yet, based on air quality.

air, we dare to take a look at the U.S. presidential election. The *FSJ* has a tradition in presidential election years of turning the lens on ourselves, asking foreign journalists to share views of the contest from their home countries.

We have so far managed to do that within the confines of our role as the flagship publication of the American Foreign Service Association, which is committed to remaining nonpartisan.

Members of the Foreign Service swear an oath to defend the Constitution. They take pride in faithfully serving the national interest, regardless of which party wins the White House. And they take the Hatch Act seriously, as well.

This election has tested AFSA's resolve to remain above politics and raised questions about where the lines are and should be. Our discussion starts with the Speaking Out, "Safeguarding a Nonpartisan Foreign Service" by FSO Matthew Tompkins, who argues for a baseline standard of political discretion and suggests a conversation on how much, if any, political participation is appropriate for the professional Foreign Service.

Then we offer views on the U.S. election from three journalists and one retired FSO writing from the perspec-

tives of four countries: Brazil, Austria, India and Mexico.

In another turn of the lens on ourselves, this month's Local Lens comes from Des Moines, Iowa.

In Features, Ambassador (ret.) Lannon Walker shares the story of his diplomatic travels around Africa in 1980 with Muhammad Ali, heavyweight champion and diplomat extraordinaire. And FSO and AFSA dissent winner Amelia Shaw is back with a story about the problem of undocumented American children in Mexico, "An Invisible Tide: Undocumented U.S. Kids in Mexico."

In closing, I'd like to share very good news from the *Journal*. We are about to become the proud stewards of a complete digital archive of *The Foreign Service Journal*.

For at least a decade, *FSJ* staff and the Editorial Board have advocated for a fully accessible online archive of the entire library of 90-plus years of the *Journal*. Hurray to the current Governing Board for giving the green light to go ahead.

Keep an eye out for news on the completion of the project and the sharing of access to this amazing cache of primary-source material on U.S. diplomacy. ■



Shawn Dorman is the editor of *The Foreign Service Journal*.

## Ambassadorships and U.S. Elections

I'd like to share a few thoughts about ambassadorships that anyone in the Foreign Service might want to ponder during this electoral season.

First, there was considerable kvetching at the start of President Barack Obama's second term, including by the former president of AFSA, about how Pres. Obama was appointing a much higher percentage of political appointees as ambassadors than the historical average of the last 50 years (which is around 30 percent).

This is to be expected. All ambassadors must present their resignations at the start of any presidential term. Those from career ambassadors are almost never accepted, and they get to finish out what is left of their normal three-year tours.

Those from political appointees are almost always accepted: the president has a new crop of people to thank for helping him get elected or reelected. Some want ambassadorships, and that is one way the president can reward them. So the frontloading of political appointments early in any term always happens and then quickly decreases until the percentage returns to normal historical levels.

Foreign Service Act of 1980 guidance notwithstanding, the 30 percent is not required by law or regulation. It is more of a tradition, with the real limitation being the number of comfortable embassies, with neither hardship nor danger pay, to which a political appointee would like to go.

President Ronald Reagan managed to push the numbers up to 38 percent by sending non-career ambassadors to exotic places like Malawi and Rwanda where normally only a career officer

would be found. Pres. Obama's second term percentage was at just below 29 percent in August and won't go up, given that the congressional appetite for confirmations withers dramatically as elections approach.

That raises a second point. What can be expected from the president who takes office on Jan. 20? Given Hillary Clinton's experience, and the precedent set by previous presidents, it seems very likely that as president she would continue the 30/70 ratio.

That is not to say there won't be controversial appointments. One prediction: *Vogue* Editor Anna Wintour—high school dropout and British citizen—will be nominated as ambassador to the United Kingdom.

What would a President Donald Trump do? There is no way to judge. One story in the *New York Post* asserted he had promised an ambassadorship to the publisher of the *National Enquirer* in return for all the favorable coverage he has received from that epitome of responsible journalism.

One could argue that with few mega-donors, Trump might make fewer political appointments. He is a nontraditional candidate, the first ever of a major party in American history to have no experience in either government or the military. The anti-insider candidate might appoint only outsiders as ambassadors. Think of the possibilities for a new reality TV show called "Ambassador Apprentice."

On the other hand, lacking any background in foreign affairs, a President Trump might make all his nominations from the career ranks to compensate. From the perspective of those FSOs

with near-term chief-of-mission ambitions, both the downside risk and upside potential are much higher for a President Trump than for a President Clinton.

One thing about which there is no doubt is that the foreign policy of the former would be far more challenging to represent than that of the latter. And if one wanted to make American embassies and ambassadors bigger targets for terrorism, it would be hard to think of a more effective way to do that than suggesting policies like banning Muslims from entering this country, torturing terrorist suspects and murdering their families.

*Dennis Jett*  
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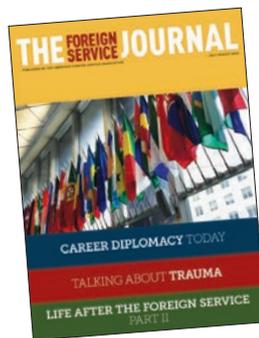
## Writing Skills Required

In his article "Examining State's Foreign Service Officer Hiring Today," in the July-August issue of *The Foreign*

*Service Journal*, Glenn J. Guimond notes: "Those who have worked with the State Department's entry-level professionals in recent years can attest to their outstanding skills and abilities."

Yet early on in the article he states: "In response to dissatisfaction among Foreign Service managers over the quality of entry-level officers' writing ability, BEX [the Board of Examiners] is seeking ways to better measure a candidate's business writing skills."

Well, now. The ability to write well has always been considered one of the critical elements required of a Foreign Service officer. One can analyze informa-



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tion and data, reach conclusions and recommend courses of action, but if one cannot write clearly and persuasively to convey the findings to decision-makers, it is all for naught.

While the “total candidate” approach may result in a “diverse, motivated and productive workforce,” as the article states, there appears to be a serious problem if the lack of writing skills is such that BEX must seek better ways to measure this important element.

It would have been interesting if the article had been more explicit. Does this phenomenon cut across all groups entering the Foreign Service regardless of socioeconomic background, educational level, age, ethnicity, etc.? Is it a function of millennials spending so much time on social media that their writing skills have atrophied?

In an effort to reach the department’s goal of a diverse workforce, has BEX at times been too quick to bring on board some who, upon closer scrutiny, would have been found to lack the qualities (including writing skills) necessary for a successful Foreign Service career?

One hopes that BEX comes up with a method of evaluation that weeds out those who don’t measure up, and that the department will not have to resort to remedial composition courses for incoming officers.

*William H. Barkell*  
FSO, retired  
Arlington, Virginia

### Life After the FS: No Regrets

In the “Life After the Foreign Service” section of the July-August 2016 issue, D. Thomas Longo Jr. lamented having to retire “prematurely, and involuntarily, for reasons unrelated to job performance.”

As I recall, since his retirement in the early 1990s, Mr. Longo has repeatedly—every few years, at least—used the pages of the *FSJ* to complain about his premature, involuntary, and by implication unfair, separation from the Foreign Service.

In my own case, I mandatorily retired in 1999 after my six-year FS-1 to FE-OC window closed. At that point I had been in the Foreign Service just under 25 years. Retirement was not a big deal for me. I had no regrets. To use the military pay-grade analogy, not every colonel gets promoted to general. By 1999 I was ready for a change in the pace and focus of my life.

My Foreign Service experience was overwhelmingly interesting, positive and beneficial. I wouldn’t trade it for anything. But my life in retirement has been enjoyable and fulfilling—and a lot less stressful than my last couple of years in the Service.

If I had to offer Mr. Longo (and others involuntarily retired) a few words of unsolicited advice, they would be: “Get over it. Life *does* go on after the Foreign Service.” ■

*Nicholas Stigliani*  
FSO, retired  
Bellingham, Washington

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## Colombia Peace Agreement

The Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known as FARC) finalized a peace agreement on Aug. 25 that they hope will bring an end to a bloody 52-year war.

The agreement—which must still be approved by Colombian voters on Oct. 2—outlines five main objectives: (1) Ending political violence; (2) Justice for the victims of the conflict; (3) Rural development and government investment in infrastructure; (4) Recognition of FARC as a political party and a guarantee of five seats in the Colombian Senate; and (5) Ending the drug trade.

“This is a transformational moment for our hemisphere,” said Bernard Aronson, the U.S. envoy to the peace talks. “It is a final repudiation of political violence as a means of changing governments.” Perhaps the peace deal’s biggest selling point to ordinary Colombians is the possibility that it will kick the economy into overdrive, by opening conflict zones to new investment and infrastructure projects.

The United States’ “Plan Colombia” has been a cornerstone of the U.S.-Colombia relationship and is widely credited with helping to mitigate the threat from FARC guerillas.

Reducing the illegal coca crop—the backbone of FARC funding—is also of great concern to the United States, which is the main consumer of the drug. Although coca production has gone up in the last few years, U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Kevin Whitaker is confident that with FARC engaged on a diplomatic level, the group will be more open to getting out of the narcotics trade.

A rejection by voters on Oct. 2 would be a harsh blow to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, as well as to the U.S.

diplomats who have worked with Colombian authorities for many years to achieve this agreement.

## To Address Extremism, Start with Development

As the United States works to defeat terrorist groups like the so-called Islamic State, battlefield victories are not enough, say State Department Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism Michael Ortiz and USAID Coordinator for Countering Violent Extremism Russell Porter in a July 20 Department of State “DipNote” blog post. The underlying factors that allow these groups to recruit and mobilize people to commit acts of violence in furtherance of ideologies of hate must also be addressed.

In May, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the State Department released the first-ever Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (called CVE) to prevent extremism from taking hold by using the tools of development and diplomacy.

The links between violent extremism and underdevelopment are mutually reinforcing; and USAID and the State Department recognize that the need has never been greater to address these issues.

Extremists’ actions overwhelm health systems, feed insecurity and instability, displace people from their homes and drive migration. And they impede economic growth by discouraging investment—not only from international companies, but also from local entrepreneurs.

Research shows that prevention efforts are most effective when led by local communities themselves—with young people, women, local governments, teachers and civil society directing and owning the efforts.

Development programs that reduce



FROM TOP: U.S. STATE DEPT./USAID/WHITE HOUSE

From top: Local leaders from around the world launch Strong Cities Network in September 2015. Children in Chad react to participatory theater performance, part of a USAID program to counter extremism. World leaders at the Countering Violent Extremism Summit at the White House in February 2015.

the allure of violent extremist groups have immeasurable payoffs, both in terms of reaching development goals—meaningful objectives in their own right—and in terms of advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives.

## Visa Delays Endanger Translators

Four years after working with the U.S. military as a translator in Afghanistan, Zar Mohammad Stanikzai has become a prisoner in his own home, reports Emma Huetteman in *The New York Times* on Aug. 9.

Mr. Stanikzai is awaiting a determination by Congress on a special visa as part of a program to translators and interpreters who assisted the military during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He first applied for the program in 2013, after he came under fire in his car and a local imam warned his father that Mr. Stanikzai could be killed for working for Americans.

For more than eight years, the State Department has managed a visa program

## Our Ocean, Our Future

*State's Instagram Taken Over by Actor Activist Adrian Grenier*

The Our Ocean conference hosted by the State Department on Sept. 15-16 drew world leaders from government, business, philanthropy and the nongovernmental community, as well as Hollywood actor activists. The State Department Delegates Lounge was

turned into an underwater wonderland, and the Georgetown University campus was also utilized. Almost all of the events were live-streamed. More than \$5 billion was committed to the cause of saving the oceans, and dozens of initiatives were launched. Many of the major speakers at the conference called out Sec. John Kerry especially to thank him for his leadership on the issue.



for those who face an “ongoing serious threat” as a result of having provided critical linguistic support in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the last two years, 8,000 Afghans and their immediate families were issued visas through the program.

Congress has responded to the program parsimoniously, allocating the special visas piecemeal through its annual defense policy bill. Since the end of 2014, 7,000 visas have been authorized for translators and interpreters. Only 3,000 of these visas remain to be allocated, but meanwhile more than 12,000 individuals remain in line.

Efforts to authorize more visas have been stymied in the Congress. “People are going to die,” Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), a staunch supporter of the program, stated bluntly during a Senate

debate on the question. “Don’t you understand that gravity of that?”

Much of the resistance seems to stem from a growing discomfort with immigrants. One counterproposal is that for every interpreter-and-translator visa, the number of other visas available to ordinary immigrants should be reduced—to maintain a ceiling on the total number of immigrants entering the country.

Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker suspects a more sinister motivation, asking if anti-Muslim sentiment might be behind lawmakers’ reluctance to approve the special visas.

Debating whether to help those who helped the United States is itself damaging, says Mr. Crocker, because it leaves people wondering, as he put it, “What kind of people are those Americans?”

## Contemporary Quote

“As a group, we have galvanized unprecedented action for our oceans, protecting millions of square kilometers, more than twice the size of India. We’ve elevated these issue to a global stage, and we’ve educated our leaders and the public on how much our climate, food security, economic security and ultimately our future on this planet depends on the health of our oceans.”

—Actor Leonardo DiCaprio, speaking at the Our Ocean conference, Department of State, Washington, D.C., Sept. 15

## Restroom Rights

A General Services Administration bulletin published in the Federal Register on Aug. 18 confirms that federal employees have the right to use the restroom that corresponds with their gender identity.

This issue has received national coverage during the last year, as schools and organizations at the state level sought to legislate the use of restrooms by transgender people.

GSA states that failure to allow all federal workers to use a restroom corresponding to their gender identity would be considered sex discrimination. The memo also confirms that no proof is required of federal workers wishing to avail themselves of this right.

Finally, it states that employers may not restrict a transgender person to a single-user restroom, unless that restroom is also available to all employees who might choose to use it.

## 50 Years Ago

### Nothing to Fear

The July [1966] editorial on the “Rationale of Selection Out” is a moderate, diplomatically phrased and well-reasoned rebuttal of Mr. Walters’ demand for Civil Service standards and security for those involved in foreign affairs responsibilities.

Having been subjected for some 25 years to “insecurity” and “competition,” which according to Mr. Walters must have by this time extinguished any professional standards I may have possessed, and having survived some 19 Selection Boards despite frequent policy differences with Washington, many unpopular and often unaccepted recommendations and a number of sharp disagreements with my superiors (including an ambassador currently serving in the most critical post we have abroad), I think I am qualified to call a spade a spade as far as the Foreign Service personnel system is concerned, and this I shall do.

No one who puts security very high on their job requirement list should choose a career in foreign affairs. However, if a young officer wants to serve his country in the most challenging and fascinating area of its operations, and if he has the professional pride and ambition to do his best and take what comes, there is nothing to fear from either the Selection Out system currently in use or the new development Appraisal Report. Perhaps there are in Government service “vindictive superiors” and those “prejudiced” in their judgments, but I have yet

to run across such baselessness among my superiors or colleagues. If anything, we are too soft, too lenient in the appraisal of a man’s worth and potential.

The only realistic alternative to our present Selection Out system would seem to be the adoption of the military “up or out” criteria. Since this operates more or less automatically and thus eliminates much of the stigma of “selection out”—and in the process a great deal of “dead wood”—it is certainly worth considering. Reduced to military terms this would mean, illustratively, mandatory retirement for CAs at 60, CMs at 58, FSO-1s at 55, FSO-2s at 52, FSO-3s at 50, etc. Would this be more acceptable to Mr. Walters and other opponents of Selection Out? I doubt it.

I am convinced that the really competent and dedicated officers in AID, USIS and State covered by the Hays Bill will find the Foreign Service personnel system assuring a far greater recognition of excellence than they have ever known before. Those possessing proven abilities and leadership will go up; those who do not will be eliminated as painlessly as possible from an area of government activities too critical to our national survival to harbor mediocrity.

—David G. Nes, Cairo,  
from his Letter to the Editor  
in the October 1966 FSJ.



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### SITE OF THE MONTH: FSHub.org

Administered by the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide, FSHub.org is a comprehensive, searchable website aimed at making it easy to find Foreign Service resources. The website provides links to official, nonprofit and independent sources on a broad range of topics pertaining to Foreign Service life.

A user-friendly gateway to essential information and resources, the site is neatly organized by category: for example, FS Community Support Offices, Groups and Organizations; FS Social Media; Bidding, Travel and Moving; Back in the USA; Health and Medical; and more.



You can find information and advice on such things as researching schools overseas, transitioning back to the United States and finding eligible family member employment, as well as financial and legal resources.

As a “crowd-sourced” site, FSHub relies on the Foreign Service community to suggest relevant links. Readers can submit their links for vetting to [fshub@aafsw.org](mailto:fshub@aafsw.org).

### North Korean Diplomat Defects in London

On Aug. 16, a North Korean diplomat based in London defected; he was identified the following day as Thae Yan-ho, the deputy ambassador to Great Britain.

According to the British newspaper *The Guardian*, Thae’s job at the embassy was to “keep track of North Korean defectors living in London” and to “rebut U.K. criticism of his country’s human rights record”—not an easy task, to be sure.

Thae was able to escape with his wife and son (who was about to begin studies at Imperial College, London), according to Ethan Epstein of *The Weekly Standard*. Many who flee are not so fortunate, given that the government in Pyongyang often holds family members of North Koreans

who work outside the country hostage.

There have been several high-profile defections from North Korea recently. A Workers’ Party official fled while working in Russia earlier this year. Another North Korean diplomat, this one based in Thailand, also managed to escape within the last two years.

It seems that placating the North Korean political elite with visits to water parks and international food festivals does not make up for the constant surveillance they have to put up with, plus the very real fear of ending up in a labor camp, Epstein observes.

Maybe, he asks, we should allow a North Korean embassy in Washington after all? ■

*This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Associate Editor Gemma Dvorak.*

# Safeguarding a Nonpartisan Foreign Service

BY MATTHEW V. TOMPKINS

In 15 years of working for the federal government, I've always tried to remain diligently apolitical. I believe that I am most effective in advancing or implementing the policies and interests of the U.S. government when I haven't previously articulated my personal opinions on those policies or the elected leaders making them.

I was introduced to the concept of "principled nonvoting" as a young ROTC cadet. Abstention from politics, to the extreme of not voting, was part of the professional ethic of a nonpolitical military. It was meant to reassure elected leaders—and the public—that the military's loyalty would not have to be questioned every four years. The practice prevailed among the officer corps in the U.S. military from the end of the Civil War until the aftermath of World War II, when it began to break down.

Over the years, I have personally found principled nonvoting to be a valuable practice, yet I have also repeatedly questioned that belief. Voting is a civic responsibility—not just a right—and that consideration has often challenged my thinking on this matter.

There have also been elections where I thought passionately that the outcome mattered, and I strongly supported (or opposed) one alternative over another. But each time I have returned to the arguments supporting principled

**This is a proposal for a baseline standard of political discretion: keep our ballots secret, along with the preferences we bring to them.**

nonvoting and concluded that, for me at least, they take precedence.

Never has that belief and that practice been as difficult as in 2016. It's one thing to disagree with the policy judgments of a party or candidate, but it is quite another to believe that a candidate is fundamentally unfit for office and would pose a bona fide danger to the republic if elected: Yet I remain silent.

## The Value of Nonpartisanship

Being apolitical is actually pretty easy in epochs of the muddled middle. Apart from the most committed partisan, did anyone really feel at the time that the country would have been led in wildly different directions depending on the outcome of Bush/Clinton, Clinton/Dole or Gore/Bush? The true test of the principle of an apolitical bureaucracy—and its essential value—is when one side offers a candidate, platform or policy so fundamentally unacceptable that every fiber of your being compels you to speak out against it.

Opinions about each of our last three presidents were relatively polarized, either due to their actions, policies, attributes or the political climate at the time. So I feel safe in assuming that anyone reading this can think of at least one friend or colleague who regularly voiced disdain for one or another of them, whether in the form of a shared link on Facebook, idle talk at a bar or something more formal and politically active. How would those opinions shade your confidence in the opinion-makers' diligence implementing the policies of their despised commander in chief?

Between career stints in the Army, at the FBI and now at State during those three presidencies, I have repeatedly heard such opinions expressed about candidates, sitting presidents and former presidents. Never, in my experience, has such opining improved the dogmatists' ability to accomplish their missions—in fact, it is often easy to identify ways that it has detracted from it.

How can you effectively motivate subordinates to work on a task when you've made clear your personal opposition to the policy it supports? How can you effectively advance a position when you've made clear your disdain for the person who established it?



*Matt Tompkins is currently a vice consul in Santo Domingo and previously served in Guatemala City. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he held intelligence and policy positions with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and served as a U.S. Army officer.*

## My real hope in writing this is that we have a conversation or at least some introspection about the question: How much public political participation is appropriate for the professional Foreign Service to remain truly nonpartisan?

When you're reporting back to a superior on a task that didn't go as planned or a mission that just couldn't be accomplished, will they attribute it to the practical impediments that you describe, or to your previously stated political disdain?

### Origins of the Nonpartisan Professional Ethic

The professional ethic of a nonpolitical military originated in the post-Civil War period when General William Tecumseh Sherman, who took command of the U.S. Army in 1869, insisted on keeping the institution out of partisan politics. The traumatic divisions of the nation that had led to war were often reflected among senior officers, but in time the political neutrality of the career military became well established. Among other things, this contributed critically to the effective function of the civil-military relationship through World War II and beyond.

Such nonpartisanship could arguably have been maintained by senior military leaders simply remaining silent about their political opinions and voting preferences. However, the professional officer corps considered that insufficient: in practice, nonparticipation to the extreme of complete abstention was followed by most officers down to the junior levels. It was impossible to draw

the line of when an officer would be senior enough that their political loyalties might be relevant, so the nonpartisanship of all officers mattered.

And, critically, it was thought that even the most discreet conduct of political participation still invited speculation: partisan interlocutors would simply assume political preferences based on whatever hints they could glean, possibly with implications more disruptive than if partisan affiliation had simply been declared. It was best for all officers to simply abstain from voting altogether.

### A Baseline Standard of Political Discretion

I initially anticipated that I would make a case for principled nonvoting in the Foreign Service in this space. Our responsibility to faithfully and effectively represent the interests and advance the policies of the United States is more important than scratching a personal political itch, supporting a preferred candidate or taking a shot at one on Facebook.

But forgoing one's vote may not be for everyone, and I recognize that for a cohort as steeped in policy decisions as this one it's unrealistic to propose that people completely abstain from politics. Instead, *this is a proposal for a baseline standard of political discretion: keep our*

*ballots secret, along with the preferences we bring to them; limit Facebook posts to sightseeing, kid pictures for the grandparents and Trailing Houses questions; deflect cocktail party questions about the candidates with discussions about the process, and limit the happy hour derision to other governments' leaders.*

This entreaty comes with two important caveats. First, I am proposing a professional ethos we should collectively follow, not a policy that should be implemented. The Hatch Act is more than sufficient for establishing the minimum requirements to maintain the apolitical nature of the bureaucracy. This is a case to safeguard our professional efficacy, not make new rules, set new limits or restrict anyone's right to make personal judgments about appropriate, desired levels of political participation.

The second caveat is the Nazi exception. We all have a moral responsibility to reject policies we determine to be immoral on a fundamental level and a legal responsibility to refuse unlawful orders. When we disagree with a decision, we obviously have the opportunity to address the issue through the chain of command.

When the chain of command is unresponsive or shares the "party line" and is unable to see the different perspective objectively, we have a right (and arguably a responsibility) to make use of the Dissent Channel to flag the issue for senior consideration. And, in the extreme, we have the right and eventual responsibility to resign in the face of a policy or order that we consider illegal or immoral.

None of these actions are intrinsically partisan, and a call for diligent nonpartisanship has no implication for the appropriate use of any of these avenues of dissent. But a campaign

speech that includes a proposal that could merit any of these actions is not the same as a policy directive to be followed or rejected.

In the event that such a proposal becomes policy, each of us will have to determine what our personal red line is to merit rejecting it. This will vary, not just on the basis of personal judgment, but on rank, position and responsibilities. After the Nazis came to power in Germany, the police chief in Dachau likely reached a point of personal moral responsibility for regime actions long before the postman did.

### A Conversation Needed

I started this piece with the observation that this is a particularly difficult year to remain nonpartisan. In the end, it hasn't wound up that way for me. I find one candidate for president to be completely unacceptable in fundamental, unalterable ways. (I'm comfortable stating this, despite the thrust of this article, because from the Army to the Department of State my social network is broad enough to include people who would say that about either major candidate in this election; so my statement is actually more ambiguous than it seems to any one reader.) But that absolute abhorrence for one electoral option drives home for me how important it is that I *not* participate, for the sake of my professionalism.

This is a sensitive topic and my position is a relatively extreme one, so I know it won't be for everyone. I've made the case here for my answer, but my real hope in writing this is that we have a conversation or at least some introspection about the question: How much public political participation is appropriate for the professional Foreign Service to remain truly nonpartisan? ■

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# THE AIR WE BREATHE: LIVING WITH AIR POLLUTION

BY NICOLE SCHAEFER-MCDANIEL

**Many Foreign Service families spend a significant portion of their lives assigned to cities with unsafe air. What are the effects, and what can be done about it?**

*I coughed for three long years in Beijing—until we left. Every day when my kids came in from playing, they stank, not in a sweaty, kids-playing way, but in a scary chemical way. I knew the pollution would be bad, but I never expected it to be that bad. Some days you couldn't even see out the window. It was like the thickest fog you've ever seen, only gray and black and stinky. Some nights your eyes would start burning from the fumes of whatever was floating out there in the dark.*

—Donna Gorman, who served in Beijing from 2007 to 2010

Smog levels became so elevated in Beijing last December that the Chinese government issued a “red alert” two days in a row. That announcement forced the closure of all schools and offices, and brought factories to a standstill, in an effort to reduce air pollution over the city.

While air pollution has been slowly gaining media attention in the past few years, with stories about “hot spots” like Beijing and New Delhi raising concern, members of the U.S. Foreign Service and their families have been living and working in heavily polluted countries around the world for years. In fact, many FSOs and their families now spend much of their careers at posts with unsafe air.

Despite recent media coverage of smog alerts and rising pollution levels, there is surprisingly limited organized information available concerning what severe air pollution feels like on a daily basis and possible methods to prevent its effects. The purpose of this article is to explore air pollution in more detail and gather insights from FSOs and their family

members at polluted posts, as this growing public health concern raises important questions.

## Defining and Measuring Air Pollution

Broadly speaking, air is polluted when it contains unhealthy elements, commonly referred to as “particulate matter” (PM). According to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, PM is made up of various combinations of organic chemicals, acids, metals, soils, dirt, soot, smoke and dust.

The smaller these particles are, the more harmful they become. Those smaller than 10 micrometers in diameter (PM10) can make their way past our throats and noses and enter our lungs. From there, they can make their way to our hearts.

Bigger “inhalable coarse particles” are mostly found close to road traffic and industry, but “fine” PM (smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter, PM2.5) comes from smoke and haze. Fine PM is especially harmful because it can penetrate even further into our lungs.

Polluted air can be visible (e.g., smoke, haze, exhaust fumes) and may have a distinct smell (e.g., from coal or wood burning). However, judging the air’s quality by these assessments can be misleading. In the United States, the Air Quality Index monitors both PM10 and PM2.5 levels and assesses air cleanliness for a particular location using a number. While that calculation is more of an approximation, the AQI (as well as equivalent, country-specific air measures) remains our best tool for understanding how polluted ambient air is.

In addition, the AQI offers information on health implications (see the chart on p. 23).

In the United States, EPA’s AirNow website ([www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)) monitors air quality. In February 2015, the Department of State and EPA formed a partnership to extend that capability to measure air pollution at embassies and consulates around the world. EPA’s website provides real-time information on air quality in the following cities: Addis Ababa, Bogota, Chennai, Dhaka, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hyderabad, Kolkata,



*Nicole Schaefer-McDaniel holds a Ph.D. in environmental psychology and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in urban health. She left academia when her husband, John McDaniel, joined the Foreign Service in 2009. After assignments in Sao Paulo and Vienna, they currently serve in Ulaanbaatar, where Dr. Schaefer-McDaniel teaches in the study abroad program of the School for International Training.*

*I think a huge part of the problem is that there’s just no frame of reference for how bad it is. So you really don’t get it until you take that first breath of soot, exhaust or burning fecal matter. We’ve been lucky in that the kids haven’t had any health issues from the pollution so far, but I shudder to think about long-term effects. Two times it has really hit home, however: First, when my 3-year-old told everyone back home that the sun is gray in India, not yellow; and last year, when we stepped off the plane at night in Siem Reap, my 4-year-old took a deep breath and said, wide-eyed, “What is that smell?!” I looked at all the tropical flowers lining the tarmac and sighed, “Fresh air and flowers, honey.”*

—Jennie Willson, who served in New Delhi  
from 2014 to 2016

Jakarta, Lima, Mumbai, New Delhi, Pristina and Ulaanbaatar. (Visit [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov) for those reports; click the Department of State logo at the top right. China’s air quality is measured on a separate site, [www.stateair.net](http://www.stateair.net), but this data is scheduled to be merged with the AirNow website.)

According to the State Department’s Air Pollution Working Group—a joint policy-management-medical program that examines the issue of air quality and its effects on employee and family health—more overseas posts will be added to the AirNow site in the near future. Real-time AQI data can also be found at [www.aqicn.org](http://www.aqicn.org) (this website is run out of China). And an open-access U.S. website (<http://labs.openaq.org/aq-viz/>) plots real-time AQI comparisons among Beijing, New Delhi and Ulaanbaatar.

Finally, the World Health Organization maintains a database listing annual averages of PM10 and PM2.5 levels for 3,000 cities in 103 countries. While this data is updated yearly (most recently in July), it can be misleading for cities that are prone to seasonal air pollution (e.g., parts of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, where it is common to burn coal and wood during the cold winter months).

The recent availability of accessible air quality data can help Foreign Service employees and their family members better prepare themselves when they bid on or move to heavily polluted posts. However, we often have little understanding of what living with severe pollution actually feels like until we arrive at post.

*We thought the air in Manama, Bahrain, was better because we came directly from Cairo. But air quality [in Bahrain] is deceptively more caustic, and mixed automotive exhaust smog, desert sand, agricultural burn-back and sewage smells create a stinging cocktail that gives many residents red or teary eyes, a constant low-level cough and post-nasal drip. These are not just allergies, but physiological reactions to processing all the gunk in the air through our nasal passages, throats and lungs.*

—Bob Castro, who served in Manama from 2013 to 2016

## Air Pollution and Health

While research examining the impact of air pollution is still in its early stages—and has been hampered by a paucity of data and inconsistencies in measurement—the WHO, CDC and EPA concur that air pollution has a host of adverse effects. These range from teary eyes, obstructed breathing and throat irritation to asthma attacks and bronchitis; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and ischaemic heart/cardiovascular disease, including non-fatal heart attacks; strokes; and cancer.

Subgroups of the population that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution include children, pregnant women, those with existing heart or respiratory problems and older adults. Even though causality cannot easily be established in this line of research, and we still have no way of knowing the critical thresholds for PM level or length of exposure, WHO estimates that seven million people die annually as a result of ambient pollution (based on data from 2012).

*People often equate bad air quality with posts in China and India, but Sarajevo is one that often goes under the radar. We are in a valley, surrounded by mountains, and most of the heating here in the winter comes from burning wood or coal, leading to terrible air during the winter months. It got so bad this past December that almost all of the flights in and out of Sarajevo were canceled for about three weeks because planes couldn't land or take off safely. Lots of people at the embassy developed chronic coughs and runny noses during this period.*

—Scott Kennedy, who has served in Sarajevo since 2015

Concern about the long-term effects of exposure to pollution leads to understandable anxiety within the Foreign Service community. It is not uncommon for employees and family members to curtail overseas assignments due to the health effects of extreme pollution (see the article on p. 25).

## Prevention Methods

The general medical recommendation when AQI levels rise is to reduce exposure as much as possible. This is particularly true for vulnerable groups. Experts also advocate reducing (if not eliminating) strenuous activity, such as running or exercising, when the air is polluted. Instead, wait until AQI levels have decreased, or exercise in a place with clean air.

Home filters can improve indoor air quality, but their effectiveness depends largely on how well the building is sealed. The EPA and CDC also recommend home air filters—particularly high-efficiency particulate air filters that do not generate ozone and have a replaceable filter. (Don't forget to change it regularly.)

The CDC and EPA further find that these types of air purifiers effectively improve home air quality, especially the ones with a high airflow rate. Further, consumers are reminded to minimize additional exposure by not smoking inside the home (or at all) and not having open fires from fireplaces or candles.

When outside exposure to high AQI levels cannot be avoided, wear a face mask if possible. Keep in mind that the mask must be able to filter out PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and it must be worn correctly. Look for masks that have an N95 respirator (filter) and a seal of approval from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (part of the CDC). The N95 designation assures that the filter has been rigorously tested and, if the mask is worn correctly, will block at least 95 percent of fine PM and an even greater percentage of larger PM.

Ensuring that the mask fits correctly is trickier than it sounds, for it has to be perfectly sealed around the face. For this reason, face masks are not as efficient for men with facial hair.

Be aware that there are currently no recommended N95 face masks for children. While some brands, like Vogmasks, are available in smaller sizes, they have not been stamped with NIOSH's seal of approval because only the filters have been demonstrated to capture N95, not the combination of filter and mask. Because there is increasing demand for face masks, and because more models are available each year, it is crucial to be aware of these quality-control checks to avoid a false sense of security.

**W**e never intended for our children to spend eight of their formative years in extreme pollution. It was so bad in Beijing that I called the city ‘Gray-jing,’ with just a few ‘Blue-jing’ days per year. Mongolia’s nickname, ‘the land of the blue sky,’ is equally deceptive. Ulaanbaatar can be much worse than Beijing in terms of Air Quality Index readings. While I try to justify my children’s exposure to air pollution by balancing it with their exposure to the Mandarin language and incredible Chinese and Mongolian cultures, we will only move to low-AQI locations after this.

—Melinda Frost, who served in Beijing (2007-2013) and Ulaanbaatar (2015-2017)

Air pollution is by no means a new topic of conversation, but it is an important one. The 1948 Donora Smog in Pennsylvania and the Great London Smog of 1952 both demonstrated the detrimental effects of coal burning and industrial pollution. These events contributed to the development of the U.S. Clean Air Act, the nation’s first environmental law. Since the 1960s, that act has added numerous amendments. And some other countries have adopted similar clean air standards.

Despite such efforts, WHO currently estimates that “almost

all (98 percent) cities in low- and middle-income countries with more than 100,000 inhabitants do not meet WHO air quality guidelines”—compared to 56 percent of such cities in high-income countries. Thus air pollution remains a global challenge, beyond the scope of any one government to fix. While recent improvements in the availability of real-time pollution data now afford us a better understanding of exposure

**D**uring the winter of 2008-2009, Moscow cut off gas supplies to Europe. As a result, our post experienced severe air pollution due to coal burning, and readings off the charts caused several families to curtail their assignments. Though U.S. Embassy Sarajevo provided oxygen monitoring, daily air quality updates and so forth, I had a very young infant whose health I was unwilling to risk.

So at my own expense, I relocated my family to the coast of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Every Friday evening I would travel by train to see them and return on Sunday evening. This was our arrangement for about four or five weeks until it was safe for them to return.

—Shelbie Legg, who served in Sarajevo from 2008 to 2010

**Figure 1. AQI Categories and Meaning**

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
<b>Good</b>	0 to 50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
<b>Moderate</b>	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
<b>Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups</b>	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
<b>Unhealthy</b>	151 to 200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
<b>Very Unhealthy</b>	201 to 300	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.
<b>Hazardous</b>	301 to 500	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.

Source: <https://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=aqibasics.aqi>

# AIR POLLUTION RESOURCES

## **CDC—Air Quality**

[www.cdc.gov/air/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/air/default.htm)

## **Department of State Global Air Quality Partnership**

[www.state.gov/m/pri/gdi/airquality/index.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/pri/gdi/airquality/index.htm)  
[www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/02/237573.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/02/237573.htm)  
[www.state.gov/m/pri/gdi/airquality/c70218.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/pri/gdi/airquality/c70218.htm)

## **Department of State Air Pollution Working Group**

Email: [MEDair@state.gov](mailto:MEDair@state.gov)

## **Department of State Open Net**

[https://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Air\\_Pollution](https://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Air_Pollution)  
[snip.state.gov/bno](http://snip.state.gov/bno)

## **EPA Particle Pollution and Health**

[www.epa.gov/pm-pollution](http://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution)

## **EPA Air Resources Page**

[www.epa.gov/learn-issues/air-resources](http://www.epa.gov/learn-issues/air-resources)

## **Health Effects Institute**

[www.healtheffects.org/index.html](http://www.healtheffects.org/index.html)

## **WHO Fact Sheet (Ambient and Indoor Pollution)**

[www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/)

## **WHO Database (Ambient (Outdoor) Air Pollution in Cities, for download)**

[www.who.int/phe/health\\_topics/outdoorair/databases/cities/en/](http://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/databases/cities/en/)

## **AQI DATA**

### **EPA Air Now**

[www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov) (click Department of State logo for overseas information)

### **Mission China AQI Data**

[www.stateair.net/web/post/1/5.html](http://www.stateair.net/web/post/1/5.html)

## **Real Time AQI**

[aqicn.org/map](http://aqicn.org/map)

## **OpenAQ Real Time Comparison: Beijing, New Delhi and Ulaanbaatar**

<https://labs.openaq.org/aq-viz/>

## **PREVENTION METHODS**

### **Extremely High Levels of PM2.5: Steps to Reduce Your Exposure**

<http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/20130201-pm25-steps.html>

### **Home Air Filters**

#### **EPA Guide to Home Air Filters**

[www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/guide-air-cleaners-home](http://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/guide-air-cleaners-home)  
[www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/residair.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/residair.html)

#### **California EPA Recommendation on Air Filters**

[www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/aircleaners.htm](http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/aircleaners.htm)

[www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/aircleaners/certified.htm](http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/aircleaners/certified.htm)

#### **Independent Reviews of Air Purifiers**

[www.air-purifier-ratings.org/index.html](http://www.air-purifier-ratings.org/index.html)

<http://ahamverifide.org/search-for-products/room-air-cleaners/>

### **Face Masks**

#### **FDA Recommendation on Face Masks and N95 Respirators**

[www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/GeneralHospitalDevicesandSupplies/PersonalProtectiveEquipment/ucm055977.htm](http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/GeneralHospitalDevicesandSupplies/PersonalProtectiveEquipment/ucm055977.htm)

#### **Guide to Wearing Face Masks Correctly**

[http://oehha.ca.gov/air/risk\\_assess/wildfirev8.pdf](http://oehha.ca.gov/air/risk_assess/wildfirev8.pdf) (p.17-20)

to high levels of pollution and its potential effects on health, more research is necessary to determine just how much exposure is harmful.

Researchers also need to establish a causal relationship for short- and long-term effects. The field of public health faced a similar situation a half-century ago, when experts started to detect the harmful effects of cigarette smoking; it took decades of research to create policy and political and societal change.

The takeaway should not be to panic about air pollution, but to start minimizing exposure and taking this issue seriously. An increased awareness of air pollution and its effects on Foreign Service employees' and family members' lives also

raises questions for the Department of State and other foreign affairs agencies:

- Should there be additional incentives for serving at highly polluted posts?
- Should there be extra medical attention or screenings for those heading to or serving at polluted posts?
- Should children be allowed at severely polluted posts when no adequate face masks exist to protect them?
- What can State and other agencies do to help safeguard the short- and long-term health of its employees and family members who serve at these posts? ■

# BREATHLESS IN JAKARTA

## A CAUTIONARY TALE

MAC COATES/WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/49246618@NC4/471954965

**Pollution can lead to serious health issues,  
and dealing with that can be a bureaucratic nightmare.**

BY DEBORAH LYNN

**W**hen I received word that my bid to be cultural affairs officer in Jakarta had been accepted, I was thrilled!

I looked forward to finding a great school for my son and daughter, doing interesting

work in an important, Muslim-majority country, and exploring a



*Deborah Lynn, a Foreign Service officer since 1998, served as cultural affairs officer in Jakarta from 2014 to 2016. She previously served in Frankfurt, Kyiv, Tbilisi, Moscow, Afghanistan and the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, and she was seconded to NATO's International Staff. She currently serves as deputy director for the Africa Team at State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization. The views expressed are hers alone and not necessarily those of the U.S. government.*

country and region where I'd never served. To be sure, I understood the drawbacks to living in a megacity; the risk of contracting dengue, typhoid and other tropical diseases; and the horrendous traffic in Indonesia's capital. But I was ready to take those challenges in stride.

Indonesia, indeed, proved to be a fascinating place to live, work and travel—until nine months into my tour, when I came down with pneumonia.

### Running Ragged

Prior to arriving at post in 2014, I had prided myself on being physically active. I frequently participated in races ranging from 10 milers to marathons, and hoped to do the same in Jakarta. My work schedule made that more difficult, but I fit in runs whenever I could—at the school track while my son was at evening Boy Scout meetings or around my neighborhood on Saturday mornings.

In early June 2015, I felt myself fighting the hacking cough and upper respiratory issues that seemed to be making the



COURTESY OF DEBORAH LYNN

After her recovery, the author and her son, Ethan, enjoy a 78-mile hike in the Shenandoah National Park this past summer.

rounds of our section of the embassy. When my lungs became so tight that simply breathing became difficult, I headed straight to the medical unit where I was given a nebulizer treatment.

Unfortunately, my health continued to deteriorate. I spent several weeks working from my sofa, handling pressing work issues via my Blackberry as best I could. The medical unit operated a branch at the South Jakarta American Club, where I lived, so I walked over there every couple of days for a check-up. The first several times, they sent me right back home to rest. But eventually they dispatched me to get chest X-rays, which showed pneumonia.

Besides upping my medications and making me rest, there wasn't much they could do. As a divorced mother of two teenagers, a medical evacuation was not a practical option, but I did spend several days visiting a pulmonologist in Singapore, who dismissively told me that the pollution was aggravating my lungs and recommended that I take asthma medication. But she offered no advice on how to heal my lungs, or whether that was even possible.

For the next seven months I relied on oral steroids, inhalers, nebulizer treatments and significant amounts of sick leave to

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I still have no idea what the true extent of the damage to my lungs is.

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meet the bare minimum work requirements. My lungs felt raw, like they were being crushed. I could barely breathe and talk at the same time, and my cough was horrifying.

I was no longer capable of any sustained physical exertion and had to dramatically cut back on what I could do, both as an officer and as a mother. I visited the health unit every few days and listened to a variety of theories of what was wrong with me. Imagine the horror of being told that maybe your latent tuberculosis was active again, or that you might have cancer or Legionnaire's disease. Or the frustration of hearing speculation that maybe it was all stress-induced and in your head.

The staff finally settled on a diagnosis of "reactive airway disorder." Given the limited medical options in Jakarta, very little

could be done to treat it, and no one could be certain just how much long-term damage my lungs were enduring.

### **With a Lot of Help from My Friends**

Some days I could only manage four hours in the office, and most evenings I was too exhausted to be the engaged mother I used to be. Friends and colleagues sent over cooked dinners and visited to make sure I wasn't completely alone.

My direct supervisor was highly supportive and my staff went to great lengths to ensure that we continued moving forward on our programs and initiatives. But it became increasingly clear that continuing to live in Jakarta was no longer a viable option. So I began to look for an exit strategy, despite the personal and professional disappointment that came along with that.

Because the 2015-2016 school year had already started, I looked for ways to plan an orderly departure for the following May, thinking I could survive on meds and sick leave until then and post could find a replacement while we were still in the normal assignment cycle. While my career development officer had never encountered a situation like mine, he was immensely helpful and did everything he could to support my shortening the length of my tour.

Yet despite having Embassy Jakarta's support, we could not find a way to pull off a curtailment within the system. It seemed that only emergency departures from post, either as a compassionate curtailment or a medical one, were possible, which meant leaving within 30 to 90 days.

By this time, my daughter had moved on to college, but I was increasingly concerned about the impact of a midyear transfer on my son. Despite how hard it would be for me, the best option was to transfer him to join his father at his post. The Human Resources Bureau initially didn't want to move him from my orders to his father's until I had already been curtailed from post. But that would have required our son to return to the United States with me, and then be added to his father's orders, only to transfer back to another Asian city.

Finally, after more than a month, HR figured out how to do a direct transfer for my son from Jakarta to his father's post. During all this time, I survived on three to four nebulizer treatments daily to be able to function at the most basic level. Concurrently, we applied to the international school at my son's new post and arranged for his visa. Once all this was in place, the regional medical officer asked the department to downgrade my medical clearance, and I curtailed from post.

Next I received a waiver extending the number of home leave days I could take to 45 so I could recover in the fresh, clean air

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While everything seems to have worked out in the end, the whole experience was more traumatic than necessary.

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in Kansas and Colorado. Friends and family were aghast at the sounds and fluids coming from my lungs, but after about three weeks, I was able to take long walks.

I have now been off my medication for several months, and I can run again, even though it is followed by intense coughing as my lungs continue to heal. Professionally, I'm very happy to have landed in a great office at State with interesting work. My son is now living with his father and has adjusted well to his new school. Technology has been great for keeping in contact with my son on the other side of the world, and I'm looking forward to an extended summer visit. But every day I miss the opportunity to be a part of his daily life and watch him grow up. His absence is, by far, the hardest part of all of this.

### **Lingering Questions**

While everything seems to have worked out in the end, the whole experience was more traumatic than necessary.

First, it shouldn't have been such a struggle for me to get the help I needed to make a dire situation tolerable for me, my family and the post. It quickly became clear that the embassy medical unit was severely constrained in what it could do for me in Jakarta.

Since I returned to the United States this spring, MED has offered me neither support nor screenings, nor information on what happens to me next. And as I prepare to bid next summer, I have no idea what posts to avoid because of high pollution levels.

I still have no idea what the true extent of the damage to my lungs is, although I'm currently seeing a local pulmonologist who is running lots of tests. While I've heard that a State working group exists for people like me, I don't know how or whether MED is tracking cases like mine to determine how pollution affects the health of Foreign Service employees and their families living overseas.

At the very least, additional flexibility within the Human Resources Bureau would lessen the impact on families who need to make arrangements in cases like mine. ■

# The U.S. Election Through **Brazilian** Eyes

**The contest between two colorful personalities has drawn unprecedented attention and some concern here, but there is little fear of changes in the bilateral agenda.**

BY CARLOS LINS DA SILVA

**T**he American presidential elections are always a very important topic for the Brazilian news media. After all, the United States and Brazil have long enjoyed close cultural, economic and social ties. In addition, as the largest democracies in the hemisphere they have shared cultural and political values, as well as mutual geopolitical interests in both South America and the world.

Of course, as is true in many other large countries, only a small fraction of Brazil's society is interested in foreign affairs. And even that demographic's attention tends to focus on personalities, rather than the issues and platforms—especially with candidates as colorful as Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. The battle between the first female presidential candidate of a major U.S. political party and her picturesque adversary has motivated the Brazilian media to step up their coverage of the American election as rarely before.

Admittedly, Barack Obama had also been in the spotlight in 2008, both for his strong leadership qualities and the prospect

that he would become the first African American to reach the U.S. presidency. The empathy between Obama and the Brazilian public was immediate, and so strong that interest went beyond those who regularly follow international news. In effect, Obama became a pop star in Brazil, a reputation he reinforced with subsequent presidential visits here.

Until recently, Brazilian politicians generally assumed that Republican administrations are better for our national interests than Democratic ones. Contradictorily, however, in almost every U.S. election the Democratic candidate is more popular here.

The reason Republicans have been considered preferable is that they were seen as more committed to free trade than Democrats. This year, however, Donald Trump has consistently denounced trade agreements and promised to “put America first.” As a result, most Brazilians have found no rational reason to prefer him over Hillary Clinton.

## **Familiar with the Clintons...**

Although no public opinion polls have assessed the support that the two candidates have among Brazilians, it is a safe bet that a majority would like to see Clinton elected. Her husband was hugely popular in Brazil during his years as president and remains so today. He frequently returns to Brazil for speaking engagements or for events related to his humanitarian work. And he has developed a good relationship with two former Brazilian presidents (Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva), despite the fact that they are political enemies.

When she was first lady, Hillary Clinton made two highly successful visits to Brazil, and she returned many other times



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as Secretary of State. She continues to have a good personal image within the Brazilian public and has cultivated a network of relationships with local politicians, diplomats, journalists and nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that assist children, improve health care and celebrate the African heritage of many Brazilians.

Donald Trump, on the other hand, was far less familiar to Brazilians until he began his presidential campaign. Occasionally celebrity news coverage of his affairs, divorces and weddings appeared in the tabloids, as well as business reports on his real estate projects. But not until 2014, when the Brazilian version of “The Apprentice” premiered, did he receive regular media attention here.

### ...Intrigued by Trump

During the primaries, Trump mentioned Brazil a few times—but only as one of many countries he claimed take advantage of the United States through unfair trade practices. In fact, America has consistently run trade surpluses with Brazil, one of the few major economies for which that is true.

When Trump’s nomination by the Republican Party was almost assured, one of his aides, Walid Phares, said in a May 2 interview with *Folha de S. Paulo* that Brazil would be “more heard” by the White House under Trump than ever before. But he did not elaborate on how this would happen.

Trump’s name has also been in the news this year because the first local hotel affiliated with his brand, the Trump Rio de Janeiro Hotel, was inaugurated just before the Olympics started. However, a much more ambitious and controversial project—the Rio Office Trump Towers, five 38-story buildings—remains stalled. Construction should have started last year, for completion in 2018, but has been held up by allegations of suspicious financial operations, according to an investigative report published by *Agencia Publica* on Aug. 8.

Even so, many wealthy Brazilians admire Trump and enjoy going to his casinos and hotels in the United States. His support among conservatives in Brazil should not be underestimated, as I can attest.

On June 24 the business daily newspaper *Valor Econômico* ran a long article I wrote about the American election, in which I presented several pieces of evidence to suggest that Hillary Clinton was the front-runner and would probably win the November poll by a relatively large margin, maybe even by a landslide.

The article stirred many reactions from readers, most of them highly critical of my analysis. Some were aggressive, calling me a “leftist” and attacking me along with all the journalists who

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Until recently, Brazilian politicians generally assumed that Republican administrations are better for our national interests than Democratic ones.

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had predicted that Brexit (the campaign for Britain to leave the European Union) would fail in the British referendum held June 23. Citing the Brexit vote as a precedent, much as Trump had, my critics opined that Trump would win in November—despite the opposition of “intellectuals” like me.

### A Solid Bilateral Relationship

Most respected foreign affairs analysts in Brazil have been arguing that although it usually does not make much difference for Brazil who is elected president of the United States, this year is different.

Normally, the longstanding ties between Brasilia and Washington (in business, science, the arts, higher education, etc.) are strong enough to smooth over minor political disagreements. This was most recently confirmed in the years when Presidents Luis Inácio Lula da Silva and George W. Bush led their respective countries. The two were far apart ideologically, but still got along well on a personal level. As a result, the bilateral relationship did not suffer much. After diplomatic relations reached their nadir in 2010, when Lula signed an agreement with Iran and Turkey to monitor the Iranian nuclear project against the wishes of the Obama administration, the overall bonds between Brazilians and Americans actually grew closer.

In 2011, when Brazil launched Science Without Borders, an ambitious program to send 100,000 college students abroad, the United States was by far the preferred destination. Brazil also became one of the largest sources of tourists for the U.S. market. Brazilian investors bought such American businesses as Burger King, Budweiser and Heinz, to name but a few. Finally, institutions from both countries signed dozens of scientific agreements, and many American states have opened offices in São Paulo to foster business and relations at the regional level.

Even after President Dilma Rousseff canceled a state visit

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## Trump's support among conservatives in Brazil should not be underestimated.

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to Washington in 2013 when the National Security Agency was found to have recorded her personal phone calls, the overall bilateral relationship did not deteriorate.

### The Status Quo vs. the Unknown

What now makes observers in Brazil uneasy is the possibility that a Trump victory could undermine the world geopolitical status quo, and the resulting instability could mar Brazil's economy, which is already reeling from President Dilma Rousseff's impeachment and other problems.

This is not an idle concern. Consider Trump's inflammatory rhetoric about traditional allies, be they members of NATO or Mexico; his pledge to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on climate change; and his opposition to immigration in general and by Muslims, in particular. These and many other diatribes have the potential to harm Brazil, among many other countries. That said, there is no reason to believe either administration would set out to alter the bilateral agenda.

On the Brazilian side, the Michel Temer administration has been much friendlier to the United States and to American investors than either the Lula or Rousseff governments. Chances are that bilateral trade will increase significantly, and more investments from the United States will flow into Brazil.

Brazilians will watch the November election closely, a little bit concerned about the chances of Trump winning, but confident that nothing will affect the friendship and the common interests our two peoples have built up over the past centuries. Brazilians have never forgotten that the United States was the first nation to recognize their independence from Portugal. ■



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# You Are Not Alone, Believe Me

**Donald Trump might be uniquely American in his demeanor and rhetoric, but to Austrians the factors behind his startling success are not.**

BY VERENA GLEITSMANN

**T**his has been an unusual year to be a foreign correspondent in Washington, D.C. Apart from the usual excitement about the question who is going to be elected president of the world's most powerful country, this year has something else to it, some other kind of spice to season our daily coverage.

The “Donald Trump phenomenon” dominates not just the U.S. news cycle, but the daily coverage our bureau is producing for our Austrian audience. Indeed, it has created so much interest throughout the entire world that it has only been overshadowed by the horrific terror attacks in France, Germany and Turkey.

The most common question friends, family members and our viewers and listeners ask me is this: “How can someone like Donald Trump become the nominee of a major American political party?”

Some of you might expect me to answer that question with some sort of finger-pointing or anti-American schadenfreude, which is often an easy out for foreigners. But I must disappoint

you in that regard. While Donald Trump might be uniquely American in his demeanor and rhetoric, the underlying factors behind his success are most certainly not. In my home country of Austria, as well as in France, the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the West, we see similar figures and trends.

## Elite vs. Outsiders

In June, Britons shocked the world with their “Brexit” vote to exit the European Union. The “Remain” campaign was narrowly defeated (52-48) despite being led by then-Prime Minister David Cameron; his successor at 10 Downing Street, Theresa May; the majority of members of Parliament; and even important pop-culture idols like David Beckham and Eddie Izzard—in short, the so-called elites. The “Leave” result was a win for the populist political groups that orchestrated a fight for “independence” from Brussels and the London elite, drawing upon the same fears and xenophobia that underpin Trump’s success.

On May 22, Austria held the second round of its own presidential election. It was the first in my lifetime that was too close to call on election day. Absentee ballots narrowed the margin of victory for Alexander van der Bellen, a retired economics professor and former leader of Austria’s Green Party, over right-wing candidate Norbert Hofer, to a mere 31,000 votes.

Hofer and his Freedom Party (FPÖ) had speculated about a rigged election well before voting occurred (does that sound familiar?) and immediately challenged the outcome. The Constitutional Court of Austria overturned the May 22 result, citing procedural errors in the vote count, and scheduled a rerun for early October. Even though the court made it clear that there were no



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These populist movements resonate with anxious, insecure and angry citizens, who feel disappointed by their politicians and have lost faith and trust in the political class and system.

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indications of actual fraud, the FPÖ cheered a win against “the system.” During the campaign, Hofer portrayed Van der Bellen as the candidate of the *hautevolee* (elite) and criticized his network of supporters from a variety of political parties, celebrities and members of the media.

As you can see, the similarities are striking. What we are witnessing is not a question of traditional partisanship—right versus left, or liberal versus conservative. Rather, it is a growing cleavage between the political establishment and self-styled “outsiders.” These populist movements resonate with anxious, insecure and angry citizens, who feel disappointed by their politicians and have lost faith and trust in the political class and system.

Mr. Hofer’s voters are not so different from those of Mr. Trump. Mostly white collar and male, they are often portrayed as *globalisierungsverlierer* (the losers of globalization). Traditional jobs are being outsourced or replaced by cheaper labor forces. The working class suffers from economic losses and feels threatened and marginalized by the new world order, thus increasingly turning to populist and nationalist beliefs, and against immigrants, who they claim are taking their jobs and constitute an economic and cultural threat.

Both in Austria and the United States, the presidential elections have been dominated by the migration crisis and recent terrorist attacks. While the U.S. discussion about accepting only 10,000 Syrian refugees, and only after an 18- to 24-month background check, seems rather laughable to a country dealing with 90,000 asylum applications in 2015 (more than 1 percent of our population), the idea is the same on both sides of the Atlantic. Voters are choosing between the *willkommenspolitik* (the “welcome policy”) promoted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Alexander van der Bellen and (to some extent) Hillary Clinton—and the policy of exclusion, keeping immigrants out by building fences and walls, which has been promised to voters in Europe and in the United

States by candidates like Donald Trump and Norbert Hofer.

It is noteworthy that this phenomenon does not just affect the political right. The anti-globalization mood has deep roots in the left, as well: Witness the furor in your country over the Trans-Pacific Partnership (which Hillary Clinton initially supported, before pressure from her Democratic opponent Bernie Sanders forced her to repudiate it) and in Europe over the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. In Austria, Van der Bellen’s Green Party is the most vocal opponent of TTIP, which led the professor of macroeconomics to alter his stance on free trade. In the United States, some Bernie Sanders supporters are so opposed to anyone other than Bernie and his stance on the TPP that they booed their own candidate for endorsing Mrs. Clinton.

### The Campaigns from the Outside

As foreign journalists, whose reports are aired only in our home countries and have no viewership in the United States, our access to politicians and presidential campaigns is inherently difficult and restricted. Even under the most favorable conditions, I would never land an interview with President Barack Obama or House Speaker Paul Ryan. But this year’s election cycle has been a particular drag for us foreigners.

Mr. Trump’s skill at channeling the “America First” sentiment that is so prevalent in large parts of this country, paired with his anti-media rhetoric, leaves us viewing his campaign literally “from the outside.” I have not met any colleagues from abroad who have been granted credentials to cover one of the Trump campaign events. We are left with the material the big U.S. networks provide us, and supplement it by interviewing his supporters outside rallies and even purchasing tickets online to attend as public visitors.

To be fair to the Trump campaign, we do not enjoy unrestricted access to Hillary Clinton either. At her campaign kick-off on Roosevelt Island in New York last year, European TV outlets were granted one camera only to share for live shots, and some credentials were withdrawn on short notice. However, we do get access to events on a regular basis and are not actively locked out at Democratic campaign rallies.

The Trump campaign does not reply to most media requests for access, and when we tried our luck in person at a Trump rally in Las Vegas, the campaign quickly denied us entry. They told us the press area was already too crowded; but the teenager next to us, who reported for his high school newspaper, was granted access. While it is something of an honor to share this situation with *The Washington Post*, it does underscore how little Trump and his team care about the rest of the world.

I don’t mean to elicit compassion for my personal struggles for

access to campaigns, but what I do find highly concerning is the willingness of political figures to undermine the trust in democratic institutions, such as the media.

### Casting Doubt on Democratic Institutions

Mr. Trump has had a long history of discarding journalists whom he feels do not treat him well. He repeatedly calls the media “dishonest” and “untrustworthy” and urges his voters to believe him instead of relying on the traditional media outlets to fact-check his statements.

We are witnessing similar developments in Austria and Germany. At campaign events, we hear people chanting “lügen- presse” (lying press), and we see them increasingly relying on the open space of online blogs and hobby reporters, who happily trade facts with rumors and conspiracy theories.

While I understand frustration with a political establishment that seems out of touch with its citizens, and to some extent even out of institutional control, I find it highly dangerous that populists like Mr. Trump, Britain’s Nigel Farage or Austria’s Norbert Hofer

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To be fair to the Trump campaign, we do not enjoy unrestricted access to Hillary Clinton either.

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continuously question the validity of our democratic systems and their institutions. They are working to plant seeds of mistrust and undermine the very system that makes their candidacies possible.

Mr. Trump recently stated that the only way he could be defeated in November is if the tabulation is rigged. As I noted earlier, the Austrian FPÖ was successful in casting doubt on our presidential election. And in England, some Brexiteers even warned voters not to use the pens in the voting booths to avoid manipulation by the government, insinuating that the pens could



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We, the members of the media, have to stop reporting on political gaffes and instead focus on fact-checking the candidates' policies.

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be filled with some kind of magic ink that would erase all votes in favor of leaving the European Union.

#### Where Does It End?

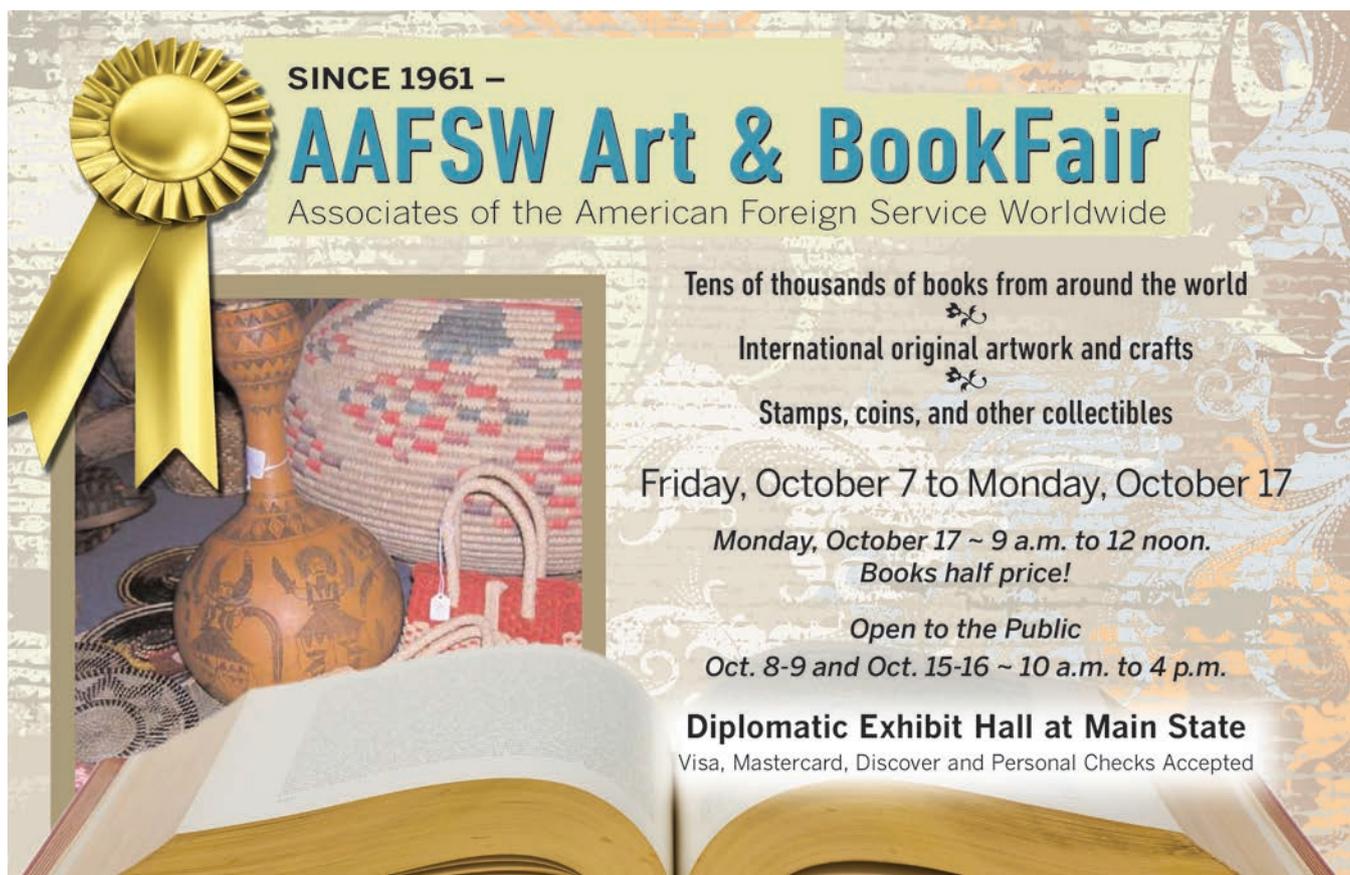
Winston Churchill famously observed that “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” That assessment is as accurate now as it was in 1947. But turning back time to embrace oppres-

sive governments and nationalistic policies is surely the worst of bad choices for the future.

We all have our roles to play to prevent this from happening. The so called “elites” in the U.S., Austria and all around the world have to listen more to the concerns and fears of the people who feel they are not being heard. We, the members of the media, have to stop reporting on political gaffes and instead focus on fact-checking the candidates' policies. And politicians have to stop playing with the fire of populist ideas and understand that no one can trump Trump.

Speaking as a foreign correspondent, these are exciting times. During my three years in your country, I have learned a lot—not just about Americans, but about my own country and my profession, as well.

And while I don't know the answer to my initial question—How can someone like Donald Trump become the nominee of a major American political party?—I hope I have succeeded in delivering one key message: Americans, you are not alone in dealing with figures like him. Believe me. ■



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# How India Sees U.S. Elections

**The old formula for evaluating the U.S. presidential contest has given way to complexities.**

BY RUCHIR JOSHI

**T**he fact that the U.S. presidential elections come around in the same years as the Summer Olympics creates a peculiar tripwire for an Indian like myself. To date India has been famously mediocre at the Olympics: we may scrape the odd gold every now and then, but our participants usually come away with bronze medals, the total of which you can count on the fingers of one hand.

There's no logical connection, but that marginalization somehow links up in my mind to how utterly irrelevant India has always been to any American presidential campaign—not that too many other countries find themselves discussed,



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at least not in positive terms, in the greatest (and extremely inward-looking) one-on-one electoral contest on earth. And yet many of us in India end up glued to the yearlong battle, with almost the same fascination as watching some Olympic sport in which we have never had any representation.

In the 1960s, in the days before we had TV, the U.S. elections came to us chiefly via the print media. While local Indian newspapers carried the daily developments, magazines like *TIME* and *Newsweek* delivered the more detailed analyses (naturally from American points of view) and *LIFE* Magazine gave us the visuals. Embedded in the local broadsheets amidst the mess of Indian politics were progress reports on the primaries and the election proper; what such and such candidate said about Vietnam, the Cold War or U.S. foreign aid—whatever might eventually ricochet into our reality; and the odd cartoon from the great daily cartoonist R.K. Laxman making fun of this Democrat or that Republican.

Historically, there was across-the-board agreement in India, even among grown-ups of opposing political views, concerning the outcome of the American presidential contest: A Democrat president would always be friendlier toward India, whereas a Republican was bound to favor Pakistan. This formula proved reliable into the Ronald Reagan administration and the end

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## The “Democrats=Good, Republicans=Bad” equation began to be formed when Dwight D. Eisenhower’s United States tilted toward Pakistan in the 1950s.

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of the Cold War. Then it began to wobble, and finally fell apart completely with the Bill Clinton administration.

Today the perceived relationship between India and the United States is far more complex and only marginally, if at all, tied to the party of the U.S. presidential victor.

### A Reliable Formula

In India, the “Democrats=Good, Republicans=Bad” equation began to be formed when Dwight D. Eisenhower’s United States tilted toward Pakistan in the 1950s, while giving short shrift to Jawaharlal Nehru’s nonaligned stance. It coalesced further when John F. Kennedy and Nehru formed a warm relationship, and Washington was supportive of New Delhi after the Chinese invasion of 1962.

Democrat or not, Lyndon Johnson was viewed as a mixed bag. The PL-480 Food for Peace program received a huge fillip under Kennedy, with Johnson carrying it forward, and the aid received by India in the 1960s was acknowledged with gratitude. At the same time, it was U.S.-donated Patton tanks and Sabre fighter jets that our military faced in the 1965 war with Pakistan.

Any ambiguity disappeared, however, with Richard Nixon. At his inauguration, the former vice president of the Eisenhower administration was already seen here as being anti-India. And things got rapidly worse. In 1971, when the Pakistan army cracked down on its own East Pakistani population and hundreds of thousands of refugees began to pour across the Indian borders, Nixon and Henry Kissinger, with their unstinting support of the Yahya Khan regime in Islamabad, quickly moved up the marquee to become Public Enemies 2 and 3, right behind the Pakistani military dictator.

During the prolonged crisis that led to war and the eventual formation of Bangladesh, the threat of the U.S. Navy’s Seventh Fleet prowling around in the Bay of Bengal, ready to intervene

on behalf of Pakistan against India’s army, was very palpable. A couple of years later there was much celebration among India’s intelligentsia when “Tricky Dick” was forced to resign in disgrace.

Continuing down the timeline, Jimmy Carter would still vie for the title of “POTUS most friendly to India.” On his official visit here, President Carter was frank enough to praise the revival of democracy in India following Indira Gandhi’s 1975-1977 Emergency, the 21-month period during which Prime Minister Gandhi ruled by decree after the president declared a state of emergency across the country. However, the benign Carter’s one term overlapped with the even shorter term of the fractious Janata government that came to power in India after the Emergency, and by 1981 both Carter and the Janata government were history.

The supposedly socialist Mrs. Gandhi returned to power in 1980, just before Ronald Reagan was inaugurated. By that time most of urban India had television, and people could actually see the actors playing out the primary roles in world politics. The conventions with their banners, the election debates, the confetti, the pomp of the inaugurations, all became part of the visual consciousness of most Indians, especially those with any pretension to being citizens of the world.

But meanwhile, a phenomenon that had begun to develop in the late 1960s continued through the 1980s, and would arguably have the deepest impact on Indo-U.S. relations from the early 1990s onward. As the Indian Institutes of Technology and other colleges began to produce students who could aspire to hold their own in an international environment, as the new urban middle class—especially in Gujarat, Mumbai and south India—began to aspire to live and work beyond the borders of the nation, group after group of young, educated Indian men traveled to America for further studies.

Many of these students stayed on and became U.S. citizens, starting families and careers in America while retaining close ties with their home towns in India. This exodus of professionals knew no parallel in the previous waves of immigration into the “melting pot.” Today’s ethnically Indian U.S. corporate leaders, state governors, mid-ranking politicians and potential Supreme Court judges are all second- or third-generation offspring from this relatively quiet migration, and they are influencing the way America and India relate to each other.

### Things Get More Complicated

From the time of Bill Clinton, the perception of the relationship between India and the U.S. presidency has become more

complex. Clinton was mostly “good” for India, of course, but as with every other American president there was no chance of him declaring Pakistan a terrorist state, something that India desperately desired.

The Clinton years were the time when the world, and especially the subcontinent, really began to pick up the tab for the official adventures begun late in Jimmy Carter’s term, through Reagan’s rule and that of George Bush Senior. The jihadi seeds planted and nurtured by Washington and Pakistan President Zia ul Haq in Afghanistan from the late-1970s grew into lethal organizations, broadcasting their toxic produce on the winds of local conflict. India, especially in Kashmir, suffered from the effects of this deadly short-termism.

By this time, the old bipolar world had withered, the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact had collapsed (as we saw it here, more under the weight of their own contradictions than any masterstroke by Reagan and his Star Wars team), and India had, after a fashion, embraced the “free market.” Freed of the Cold War straightjacket, Indo-U.S. relations suddenly had great, new potential to develop in a number of areas. To coin a phrase: it was now a very different ball game. One thing, however, stayed constant: the Indian and American definitions of the exact nature of that game still came from two different—if adjacent—galaxies.

India saw the election “victory” of George “Dubya” Bush as a scandal—that so important an election could be decided on the basis of a few hanging chads was unimaginable to people used to measuring convincing margins in hundreds of thousands. Indians believed Bush Junior was dangerously ignorant for an American president and would therefore be easily manipulated.

This was India’s understanding well before 9/11, and it was rapidly confirmed in the aftermath. Bush’s blundering internationally gave rise to deep pessimism in India. However, across his two terms, many Indians of a certain conservative bent were happy and grateful that he was there: the short-term maneuvers of the War on Terror brought short-term benefits to India. Among them, the nuclear deal, which was a huge triumph for both governments; Bush’s push for closer business ties between the countries; and the rebalancing of America’s strategic closeness between Pakistan and India in India’s favor.

For many of our homegrown neocons this was an outcome good enough to allow them to forget that the Iraq smash-and-grab left terminally unfinished business in Afghanistan, now a septic, roiling mess that will take us all decades to sort out. Still, Barack Obama’s inauguration was greeted in India with unbridled joy and happy tears. Obama was “good” for India (even

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Across G.W. Bush’s two terms, many Indians of a certain conservative bent were happy: the short-term maneuvers of the War on Terror brought short-term benefits to India.

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better than Jimmy Carter, according to some old-timers). There were two highly successful state visits. In turn, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was accorded a state visit and banquet in Washington, and strategically the countries became closer than ever before.

Though unable to declare Pakistan a rogue state, Obama did the next best thing—he sent in his special forces to kill the world’s number-one terrorist, right in the center of Pakistan’s military plant, providing spectacular proof of India’s accusations that Pakistan has provided wide sanctuary to terrorists. Equally, while the drone attacks in Afghanistan and northern Pakistan might be drawing criticism all over the world for the devastation wreaked on innocent civilians, in many of India’s diverse power circles there is open satisfaction that “someone, at least, is dealing with the jihadis as they deserve.”

### Observations from the Back Row

Approaching the denouement of this strangest of presidential elections, we in India are left weighing up the pugilists from the last row of the boxing arena, so to speak. The candidacy and huge popularity of Donald Trump are not that outlandish to Indians who have watched Narendra Modi work his way out of the jaws of ignominy to become prime minister. There are important differences between Modi and Trump, of course, but their startling similarities far outweigh these. Modi may come from a modest background and Trump may have emerged from a silver-spoon warehouse; Modi’s relentless religiosity may be at odds with Trump’s utter lack of it. But beyond that the differences peter out.

The politics of openly creating hate targets; the strong-man act (Trump’s big hands, Modi’s 56-inch chest); the brazen series of lies, each new one erasing the previous one; the

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The candidacy and huge popularity of Donald Trump are not that outlandish to Indians who have watched Narendra Modi work his way out of the jaws of ignominy to become prime minister.

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verbal trickery akin to a card-shark shuffling a dodgy deck; the gross insults aimed at opponents; the joshing flippancy coupled with the thin skin and willingness to play the martyr;

the accusations of corruption against the media whenever any press or television outlet is critical; all of these are scarily of a piece.

Trump's lurid declarations of his aversion to Muslims are also a big reason why many Modi-worshippers in this country are garlanding pictures of Trump and praying for his victory. And yet, even among those of us who can see the disaster a Trump presidency would be for the world, there is no faith that Mrs. Clinton will turn out to be better for India. Anybody here who has followed U.S. politics and foreign policy for a while knows that Hillary Clinton would, if she thought it expedient, sell assorted Indian interests down the river in a heartbeat, even while making a show of great warmth and deep friendship.

To shift the analogy from boxing to a somewhat nastier sport, Indian observers could be forgiven for thinking we are watching an elaborate version of Russian roulette—a version in which we don't actually play, but nevertheless get to catch whichever bullet is fired by the results in November. ■



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# Mexico, NAFTA and Election 2016

**Though it is not the first U.S. election that has really mattered to Mexico, there may be more at stake this time than ever before.**

BY XENIA V. WILKINSON

**T**he 2016 U.S. presidential election really matters to Mexico. As North American Free Trade Agreement partners and bordering countries, the United States and Mexico are linked through trade, investment, immigration and shared natural resources, as well as security and law enforcement challenges.

We share a 2,000-mile border through which hundreds of thousands of people cross daily. Two-way trade between the United States and Mexico is valued at about \$1.4 billion a day. Mexico is our top tourist destination, and the United States is theirs. The population of Hispanics of Mexican origin in the United States reached 33.7 million in 2012, according to the Pew Research Center, including 11.4 million immigrants born in Mexico and 22.3 million born in the United States.

NAFTA, illegal immigration and securing the U.S.-Mexican border are major issues in the campaign. Donald Trump's sound bites on these issues have provoked consternation and indignation in Mexico. A poll published by Mexico's *Reforma* newspa-

per in May showed that 83 percent of Mexicans prefer Hillary Clinton, compared to 3 percent for Donald Trump as the future U.S. president.

Both candidates are skeptical about free trade agreements. In this period of slow economic growth, critics in the United States argue that NAFTA is to blame for job losses and wage stagnation, driven by low-wage competition from Mexico and a \$60 billion bilateral trade deficit. Donald Trump called for "a total renegotiation of NAFTA, which is a disaster for our country. If we don't get a better deal, we will walk away." Hillary Clinton also expressed reservations: "I have said repeatedly that I would like to renegotiate [the agreement]. I think there were parts of it that did not work as hoped for."

Donald Trump's hyperbolic comments about the U.S.-Mexico border and Mexican immigrants generated even more indignation in Mexico. In March, President Enrique Peña Nieto declared that his country will not pay for Trump's proposed wall, and condemned his "strident" tone. After Trump's nomination, Peña Nieto took a different tack when he spoke to the press at the White House on July 22: "To Mrs. Hillary Clinton and Mr. Donald Trump, I want to express my highest respect." He pledged a "frank and open dialogue" with the winner of the election, and declared: "The Mexican government will be observing with great interest the electoral process, but it will not give its opinion—it will not get involved."

Then, in a surprise initiative, Peña Nieto invited both candidates to visit him. Hillary Clinton declined the invitation. Trump met



*Xenia Wilkinson is a retired Foreign Service officer. She served twice in Mexico City, from 1981 to 1984 and from 1991 to 1994.*

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## In 1992, the U.S. electoral campaign went into full swing as the NAFTA negotiations were nearing completion.

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with the Mexican president on Aug. 31 and spoke of his respect for the Mexican people and their president. Later that evening, Trump gave a hard-line policy speech on immigration in Phoenix in which he again insisted that Mexico will pay for the wall.

Responding to public indignation over his cordial meeting with the Republican candidate, Peña Nieto tweeted that he told Trump during the meeting that Mexico would *not* pay. Former Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda called the visit Peña Nieto's worst public relations disaster. With polls showing that 85 percent of Mexicans disapproved of the visit, Peña Nieto accepted the resignation of his finance minister, who had reportedly proposed the idea.

The Mexican president's unprecedented invitation to both presidential candidates to visit him before the election reveals the depth of Mexican concerns over the future of their partnership with the United States. Whatever the outcome, the two countries will have to find ways to preserve and advance this crucial relationship.

### Not For the First Time

This is not the first time that vital Mexican interests have been at stake in an American presidential race. In 1992, the U.S. electoral campaign went into full swing as the NAFTA negotiations were nearing completion. Mexico's President Carlos Salinas de Gortari linked his economic reform program to expanding trade and attracting foreign investment through NAFTA. Salinas staked his political reputation on a successful conclusion of NAFTA, and pressed for the treaty to go into force by early 1993. His term was ending in 1994, and he hoped to reap the political and economic benefits of an early boom, according to Jorge Castaneda, now a professor at New York University. Salinas portrayed NAFTA as an opportunity to transform the Mexican economy so that it would "export goods, not people." Mexico's approval of NAFTA was a foregone conclusion, but would it be approved in the United States?

NAFTA figured prominently in the campaign debates involving President George H. W. Bush, Governor Bill Clinton and billionaire businessman Ross Perot. Bush staunchly defended the NAFTA negotiations, but Clinton was somewhat ambivalent, citing the need to include labor and environmental protections in the agreement. Independent populist candidate Ross Perot made opposition to NAFTA his signature issue. Perot predicted that if NAFTA were approved, there would be a "giant sucking sound" as American manufacturing jobs were siphoned into Mexico to take advantage of much lower labor costs and less regulation. Furthermore, he argued, Mexico was governed by a one-party system that neither respected labor rights nor enforced its own environmental protection laws. Perot attracted support from labor unions, environmental groups, consumer advocates and economic nationalists.

While refraining from public comment, Salinas and his circle initially counted on President Bush's re-election. Bush was a strong advocate of NAFTA and his negotiating team, led by Special Trade Representative Carla Hills, had established excellent relationships with their Mexican counterparts. The Mexican public, too, having lived under one-party rule for more than 60 years, expected a Bush victory. Early in the campaign, the Mexican embassy's economic minister counselor, Manuel Suarez Mier, alerted Pres. Salinas that Bill Clinton could win the election. According to Suarez Mier, Salinas scoffed: "Are you crazy? How could Bush fail to get a second term in a country where re-election is permitted?" Salinas scolded Suarez for "going native" after living outside of Mexico for too long.

Clinton's position on NAFTA was initially an enigma to Mexican officials. In 1991, Suarez Mier had met with Governor Bill Clinton in Arkansas. Clinton said he was not opposed to NAFTA, but if he ran for president and won, he would need to satisfy his union supporters on labor protection. Once the Clinton campaign started to gain support, Democratic members of Congress advised Mexican officials to start making connections with the Clinton team. Pres. Salinas chose Hermann Von Bertrab, a Mexican businessman and professor whom he had appointed to head Mexico's Washington NAFTA office, for the task.

Every week, Von Bertrab sent the Clinton team a highly confidential memo on the main points of Mexico's discussions with the American and Canadian negotiators. Once Mexico's government decided it could accept Clinton's condition that side agreements on labor and environment be negotiated, Mexico was prepared to work on NAFTA with either a Bush or Clinton administration.

## An Unprecedented Lobbying Effort

After the election, Perot campaigned vigorously against congressional approval of NAFTA, stepping up his media offensive against the agreement. Unconcerned that Ross Perot would win the presidential election, given that he did not represent a major political party, Mexican leaders nevertheless believed Perot was a threat because his anti-NAFTA arguments could influence members of Congress who were undecided about the agreement.

NAFTA was so vital to Mexico that its government launched an unprecedented, massive lobbying and public education campaign to influence members of Congress to approve the treaty. Mexico's NAFTA office in Washington hired several prestigious Washington public relations, lobbying and law firms. Mexican private-sector executives met with visiting American congressional and business delegations to advocate for NAFTA. Mexico's 42 consulates in the United States conducted a grassroots campaign, particularly in districts whose congressmen were undecided, urging American citizens to write to their representatives in support of NAFTA.

Von Bertrab estimated that the Mexican government spent roughly \$10 million in 1993 and some \$18 million during 1991 and 1992 on NAFTA-related activities. Suarez Mier recalled that Mexico spent more, about \$50 million throughout the U.S., in an effort to improve Mexico's image and persuade undecided members of Congress to support NAFTA. Perot criticized lobbyists for influencing congressional decisions on free trade agreements that cost American jobs. He denounced the "revolving door" of former U.S. officials who left the U.S. government to work with lobbying and public relations firms contracted by Mexico.

Mexico's lobbying effort in support of NAFTA was conducted in cooperation with the U.S. administration. Von Bertrab recalled that in the run-up to a vote in the House of Representatives, most letters to members of Congress opposed the agreement. Concerned, Von Bertrab thought another high-profile public debate was needed. Vice President Al Gore agreed to debate Perot. Mexico's NAFTA office provided Gore with data that exposed Perot's inconsistencies and highlighted his business interests in Mexico.

On Nov. 9, 1993, Gore smoothly outperformed an irritable Perot in a televised debate on the controversial agreement. Before the debate, polls indicated that only 34 percent of Americans supported it. Immediately following the debate, support surged to 57 percent. The House of Representatives approved NAFTA on Nov. 17 by 34 votes (234 to 200), and three days later the Senate approved it by a margin of 61-38.

The NAFTA negotiations raised the level of trust between the two governments. Mexico has long upheld the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states and has insisted

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NAFTA was so vital to Mexico that its government launched an unprecedented, massive lobbying and public education campaign to influence members of Congress to approve the treaty.

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that other governments, especially the United States, refrain from intervening in Mexico's internal affairs. Mexico's sensitivities on that score were evident in 1984 when Ambassador John Gavin held a meeting in the northern state of Sonora with leaders of the opposition National Action Party (PAN) and a Catholic archbishop. Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the local press were outraged, citing the meeting as an example of U.S. interference in Mexico's internal electoral process. Gavin's pointed reminder that the Mexican ambassador in Washington frequently held meetings with Democratic members of Congress did not convince his critics that they were upholding a double standard.

## A Tested Partnership

The relationship between the United States and Mexico improved dramatically during the early 1990s. Mexico's lobbying campaign in the United States to advocate congressional approval of the agreement could not have been successful without the cooperation of the Bush and Clinton administrations. The joint effort to attain NAFTA ratification transformed the United States and Mexico from "distant neighbors"—the title of Alan Riding's excellent study—into trusted partners.

Many Mexicans now see this partnership, which has been through other crises since NAFTA came into effect in 1994, threatened by the rhetoric of the U.S. presidential campaign. Jorge Castaneda asserted that the Mexican government should openly state that Donald Trump's statements are not conducive to the type of relationship Mexico wants with the United States. Suarez Mier, now an independent consultant, suggested that the Mexican embassy in Washington and its consulates across the country meet with Hispanic groups to persuade them to motivate their people to vote. According to Bloomberg News, Mexican

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Whatever the outcome of the 2016 election, the United States and Mexico must find ways to maintain their constructive and essential partnership.

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consulates in the United States—in partnership with community organizations—hosted citizenship workshops this year for permanent residents. Many hope to vote in November as new U.S. citizens. Consular officials, reaffirming the principle of non-intervention, underscored that how U.S. citizens vote is entirely the decision of each individual.

Mexican private-sector leaders Guillermo Güémez and

Alberto Dana expressed concern that Trump's anti-NAFTA campaign rhetoric is not supported by economic analysis and instead appeals to voters' emotions. They urged Americans to analyze the economic benefits of the agreement to the U.S. economy and the potential costs of exiting. On the positive side, regional trade surged over the treaty's first two decades, from roughly \$290 billion in 1993 to more than \$1.1 trillion in 2016. Canada and Mexico are the two largest destinations for U.S. exports, accounting for more than a third of the total. U.S. foreign direct investment in Mexico increased in that period from \$15 billion to more than \$100 billion. Some manufacturing jobs have moved to Mexico—but if the U.S. were to opt out of NAFTA, those jobs might move to Asia instead of the United States.

Whatever the outcome of the 2016 election, the United States and Mexico must find ways to maintain their constructive and essential partnership. President Peña Nieto declared that the next U.S. president would find in Mexico “good faith in strengthening relations.” With so much at stake, Mexico will be watching our elections on Nov. 8 with passionate interest. ■

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Questions? Contact Perri Green, Awards Coordinator, at [green@afsa.org](mailto:green@afsa.org) or (202) 719-9700.

# Travels with The Champ in Africa, 1980

The late Muhammad Ali was a diplomat extraordinaire, as this firsthand account of a mission to Africa attests.

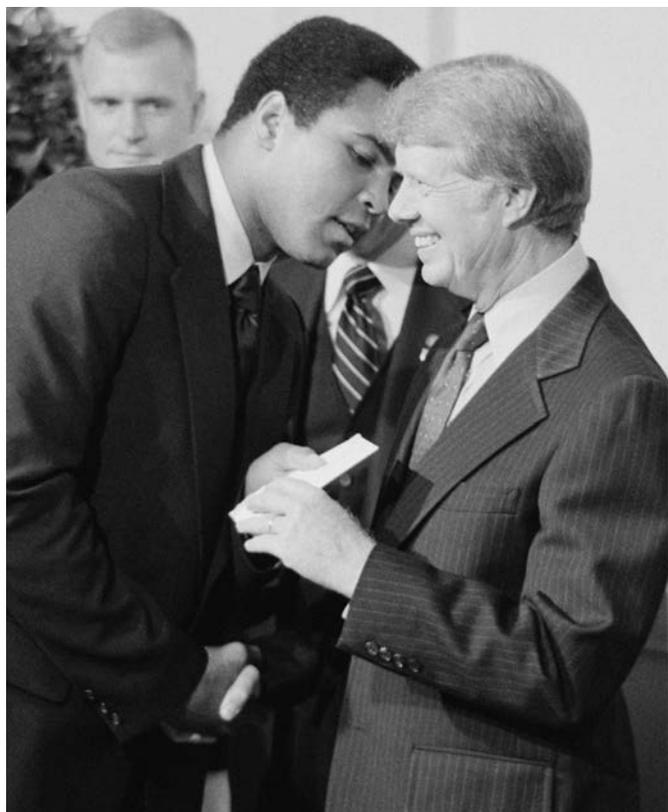
BY LANNON WALKER

**T**he Angolans had put me alone in a guest house somewhere in the suburbs of Luanda awaiting the beginning of talks where the United States planned to trade off a warming of relations with the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola government in return for removal of Cuban forces from Angola. This was an opening we had been preparing for some time via the presidents of Gabon and Congo (Brazzaville), and I was primed and anxious to begin my secret mission. Neither Washington nor Luanda wanted publicity at this stage.

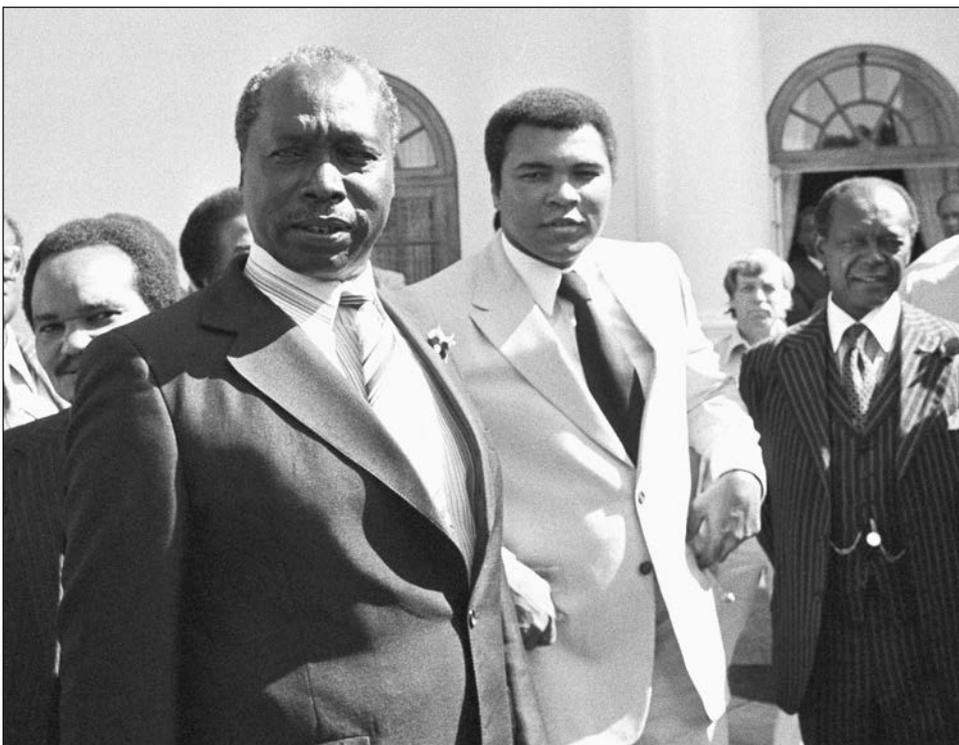
As night fell and boredom set in, there was a knock at the door. Expecting my Angolan contact, I was surprised to see the British ambassador, who formally represented U.S. interests, but who wasn't supposed to know I was in town.



*Ambassador Lannon Walker, now retired and working as a consultant, served some 38 years in the Foreign Service, mainly in north and sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Vietnam. In Washington, D.C., he held the positions of director of the Office of Central African Affairs, senior deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs and acting deputy inspector general, among others. In the mid-1960s, he led the Young Turk reformist movement, which took over AFSA in 1967. He later served as U.S. ambassador to Senegal, Nigeria and the Ivory Coast.*



President Jimmy Carter greets Muhammad Ali at a White House dinner in 1977. Three years later Ali toured Africa at Carter's request to enlist support for a boycott of the Summer Olympics in Moscow.



Muhammad Ali meets with Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi at the State House in Nairobi, Kenya, on Feb. 5, 1980, during the Olympic boycott mission.

“Surprised to find you here, Lannon, and intrigued by the message I have been asked by Washington to relay to you,” said he.

As I read the telegram from the State Department, I couldn’t believe my eyes: I was being instructed to leave Angola immediately and to make my way to Tanzania. In Dar es Salaam, I was to meet Muhammad Ali, who would arrive from India in a White House plane, accompanied by members of the White House press corps and a State Department delegation. Thence, I was to accompany Ali, as his diplomatic adviser, to several countries in Africa to persuade their leaders to boycott the Moscow Summer Olympics because of the recent Soviet invasion of Afghanistan!

It took a while, but my British colleague finally persuaded me that it was, indeed, an official instruction from Washington.

### An Imperialist Trap

After a nightmare trip involving three plane changes, I finally arrived at the Dar es Salaam airport, just minutes before Ali’s plane landed. Unfortunately, a huge crowd had already formed, and there was no way I could get through to meet Ali as he came down the stairs and was immediately swept away to the airport lounge.

When I finally fought my way into the lounge, Ali was in

the midst of a tumultuous press conference, with the African press insisting that he had fallen into a trap laid by the imperialists, a plot that intended to use Africa’s hero to undercut its revolutionary goals. Ali looked upset and announced that if he was being misled, as the press suggested, he would take his plane and return to the United States forthwith. I imagined the headlines back home.

Finally getting to his side, I introduced myself and the purpose of our mission together. Ali said nothing, but we got in the car together and had a good exchange, with me outlining how I might be able to brief him before key meetings. Ali said that sounded good to him, and we pulled into the hotel parking lot—where the champ jumped out and began to shadow box with members of the crowd

that had assembled to greet him.

It looked like good fun to me, but then a group of Black Panthers who were in exile in Tanzania swept Ali upstairs and into their room. I tried to keep up, but could only stand helpless at the door, imploring the champ to let me in. I could hear the Panthers telling him the same thing the African press had preached at the airport, and I wondered if my mission was dead aborning.

When Ali came out, he announced that he was hungry, so we went to his room and I witnessed for the first time the gargantuan amount of food the champ could put down. The next day, we learned that President Julius Nyerere had canceled his meeting with Ali, citing the same line as the press and the Panthers had used. Again, I imagined the headlines back home.

The next day, as we flew to Nairobi, Kenya, I told the champ that we would have an easier time with President Daniel Arap Moi, a strong ally. Ali asked me to describe Moi and to brief him on the politics of Kenya and the approach to take.

I thought for about three seconds and told him that Moi was a schoolteacher from a minority tribe who had served as vice president with the founder of Kenya, a strong and authoritarian ruler who brooked no interference with his wishes. I mentioned

that Moi would be accompanied by his vice president, who was very ambitious and couldn't wait to sit in the presidential chair.

And that was it. I wanted to see how Ali would introduce himself and his goal of boycotting the Moscow Olympics, and figured that we could pull it off given the receptivity of our Kenyan hosts.

### Off and Running

Moi received us at the presidential palace with all the necessary protocol and began to welcome Ali with a stiff and traditional set of remarks. Ali interrupted him and asked: "Did you always want to be president? Did you have a plan, and did you follow it?"

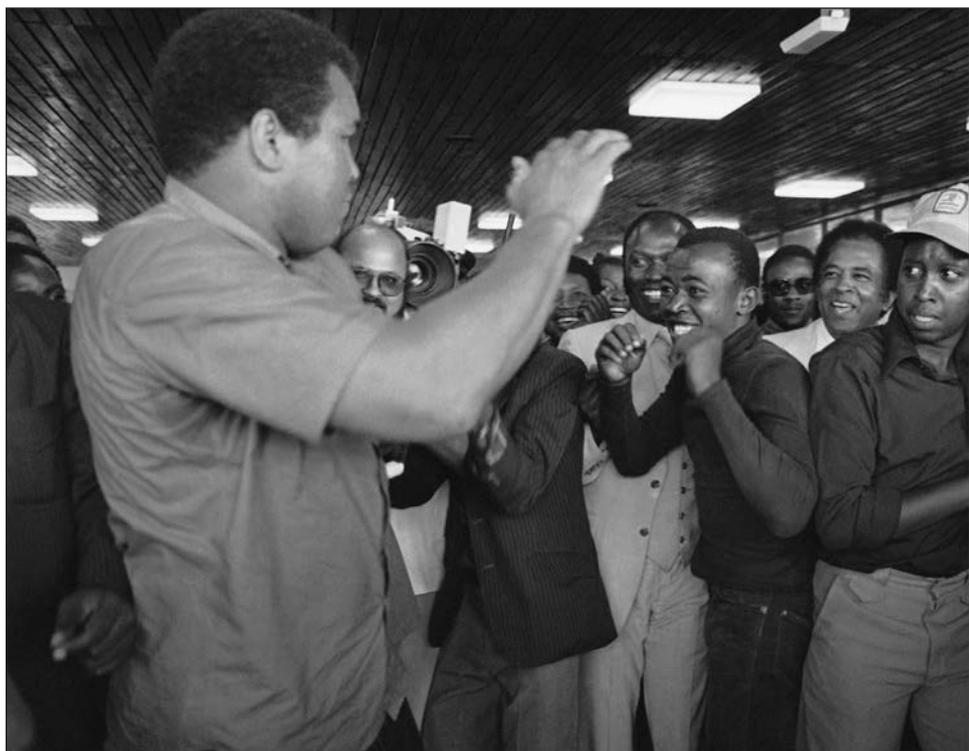
At first startled, Moi then said: "No, I always wanted to be a teacher, and I just did my job and events took over."

Ali rejoined: "That's right. You just did your job and served your country. You had no driving ambition to be president, unlike some people we know"—and he looked straight at the vice president!

Now I've done it, I thought. We're going to have a major diplomatic incident. But no—Moi instantly dropped his stoic demeanor, warmed up to Ali and proceeded to literally block the vice president out of the conversation. Things went swimmingly, and the press release was just what Washington wanted. We were off and running.

Or so I thought, until I looked at the next programmed stop on the itinerary: Nigeria. I sent an urgent message to the State Department reminding them that the Nigerians were not at all on the same wavelength as we were on almost every issue, and certainly not on the question of the Moscow Olympics. I strongly recommended that we cancel the stop in Lagos and reroute the plane to Kinshasa, where President Mobutu Sese Seko would guarantee us a huge crowd and solid support for our position.

Washington responded that Mobutu was not the ally they wanted to put front and center on this trip—and, besides, we had been told that the president of Nigeria and a host of senior ministers had agreed to meet with us.



Ali spars with a Kenyan fan after deplaning at Nairobi's International Airport on Feb. 4, 1980.

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## The score so far: one loss in Tanzania, one win in Kenya and a technical KO by Ali in Nigeria.

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As the plane taxied at Murtala Muhammed International Airport, one of the cabin crew came to me to say that I had a call on the radio in the cockpit. When I picked up the handset and identified myself, an American voice said: "Just wanted to warn you that all of your appointments have been canceled." I asked who was on the line, but it had gone dead.

Arriving at the plane's exit door, the champ asked me who we had for the first appointment. I told him that there was a slight change in plans, and that we would go first to the U.S. ambassador's office.

As we settled into our chairs, I asked the ambassador to explain to Ali where we stood on the appointments. When the champ heard that they had all canceled, he stood up in a fury and said he was going to take his plane and return to the United States.

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## His sense of timing and his ability to get inside his interlocutor's head and heart were a beauty to behold.

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"Champ," I said, "when you're in the ring and someone has you on the ropes, do you leave the ring?"

"I get your drift," Ali said, and turned to the ambassador. "Where's downtown?" he asked.

Neither the ambassador nor I had the slightest clue what he was driving at. But when the ambassador mentioned Tinubu Square, Ali took me by the arm, "Let's go there now."

The long line of minibuses that had brought us from the airport was downstairs waiting, press corps and State Department delegation included. As we pulled into Tinubu Square, Ali jumped out and began to shadow box with passers-by, of which there were hundreds.

Soon he was recognized, and the growing crowd began to chant: "Ali! Ali!" When he had whipped them into a frenzy, he turned to me: "Where was that first appointment?"

I replied that I had gotten his drift, and off we went with a large, chanting crowd in tow to the foreign ministry and our first appointment. We saw other ministers, but not the Nigerian president.

The score so far: one loss in Tanzania, one win in Kenya and a technical KO by Ali in Nigeria.

The next stop was Monrovia, Liberia, a friendly nation once founded by freed American slaves and sure to back us in our pleas to boycott the Moscow Olympics. Having learned my lesson in Kenya about Ali's ability to turn meetings to his advantage, I simply told him that President William Tolbert Jr. had been a preacher. And, indeed, the president's office was set up like a mini-church, with rows of pews facing the chief of state's desk.

Tolbert was very formal, welcoming Ali and me with all the old-style protocol of which the Liberian state was so enamored. As he spoke, Ali leaned forward from his pew and began to chant: "Speak to me! That's right, speak to me! I hear you preaching. Oh, my Lord..."

I thought, now you've done it—managed to get the champ to insult a strong ally and probably lose sure support. But no—

Tolbert began to rap back, and before my eyes the two were transformed into brothers. We were on a roll.

As we pulled into the airport at Dakar, our last stop, there was the usual press conference that we had encountered at every stop. But this time, everyone was tired; they had heard the questions and Ali's answers over and over. The TV cameras were turned off, and folks were about to take a nap—when a reporter stood up and, with a heavy Russian accent, launched into the same line about an imperialist ploy that we had heard in Tanzania.

The press corps began to wake up when Ali looked at the reporter and asked, "Are you a Russian?"

Yes, was the answer.

"Are you a communist?" Ali continued.

After some hesitation, a reluctant yes came out.

"Well," said Ali, really wound up now, as if this were the last championship round. "I've been to your country. You don't believe in God. Well, I'll tell you something, we're in Africa here, and we believe in God!"

The Russian sat down, abashed, as the press corps and onlookers cheered. The champ raised his arms in victory.

### "Could I Be a Diplomat?"

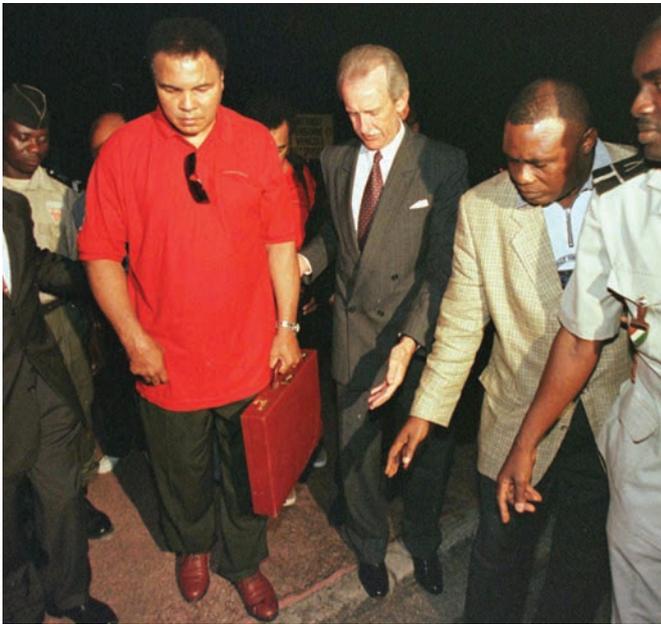
Washington considered Senegal to be a sure thing, but I told Ali that President Leopold Senghor, an honest man, had refused to go along with an Olympic boycott against South Africa on the grounds that politics and sports should not be confused. He would not change his stance, I said, even for Muhammad Ali—but as a renowned poet, he would welcome a brother bard. I told the champ to enjoy the interchange.

And that's what happened. Pres. Senghor invited us all to his personal seaside residence, where he and Ali hit it off as they recited their poetry. It was a perfect end to an extraordinary mission.

As Ali's plane took off for Washington with the press corps and State Department delegation, I remained on the tarmac. I had to get back to that aborted meeting in Luanda, I thought. Ali waved at me with a twinkle in his eye, as I am sure he recalled the several long conversations we had had along the way centered on his question: "Do you think I could do more of these missions? Could I be a diplomat?"

I had told him then, and I meant it, that he was "a diplomat extraordinaire." His sense of timing and his ability to get inside his interlocutor's head and heart were a beauty to behold. Ali combined a sense of strategy, learned from the ring, with the unparalleled ability to muster popular support, above and

ASSOCIATED PRESS



Muhammad Ali arrives in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on Aug. 18, 1997, on a mission to deliver food to 400 orphans living in a refugee camp at San Pedro along the Liberian border, where tens of thousands of refugees who fled Liberia's civil war were living. A nun caring for the children wrote to Ali asking for his help. Ali is assisted by U.S. Ambassador Lannon Walker, Côte d'Ivoire government officials and police officers.

beyond any government's policy. This dynamite combination gave him power and entrée no ordinary diplomat can muster. I wanted him to come with me to Angola.

There was more, of course, to Ali's mission than his meetings with chiefs of state and the press. Our ambassadors and their missions went all out to arrange programs where Ali could meet the people, especially local boxers, and generally show his profound generosity. Our State Department delegation handled the public diplomacy and saw to it that his strengths were displayed optimally. It was a very good show, and the Russians got the message. Their Olympics had been overshadowed by The Champ.

Years later, Muhammad Ali came to Côte d'Ivoire, where I was ambassador, to support an American Catholic nun who ran an orphanage in the eastern city of San Pedro. In a planning meeting, my Ivorian colleagues assured me that all measures had been taken to ensure security and a smooth visit.

I smiled and warned them that all their plans would go awry when Ali came off the plane. Everyone, including the protocol planners, would leave their scripts in the dust as they scrambled to reach Ali and to be able to say that they had touched the champ. And that's the way it was.

Ali was diminished in body; but his mind, good humor and strategic sense were strong. He was still on a mission to use his own power and prestige to help others. We reminisced about his mission to Africa, and I saw the fire return to his eyes. He was ready to go again. ■



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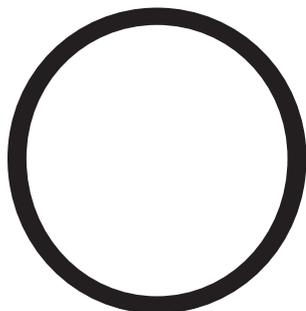
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# An Invisible Tide: Undocumented U.S. Kids in Mexico

The problem of undocumented U.S. kids in Mexico is a facet of the immigration tangle that is putting pressure on both sides of the border.

BY AMELIA SHAW



On a sunny morning in October 2015, a middle-aged Mexican woman stands with her four children eyeing the line that snakes into the U.S. consulate general in Tijuana, Mexico.

“I heard my children could get a U.S. passport,” she says, gripping a plastic folder containing their

U.S. birth certificates. When asked, she mumbles that her children were born while she was working without authorization in the fields of California. She heard of an information fair at the consulate for migrant families whose kids were born in the United States.

She looks nervous and, in the end, decides not to get in line. “I’ll come back another day,” she says, pulling her children away and disappearing into the crowd.

This woman and her family belong to a growing demographic



*Before joining the State Department in 2014, Amelia Shaw was a Fulbright Scholar, an aid worker, a reporter for NPR and a United Nations peacekeeper. Public diplomacy-coned, she is currently serving as a first-tour consular officer in Tijuana. She is the 2015 recipient*

*of AFSA’s W. Averell Harriman Award for Constructive Dissent. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. government.*

in Mexico—migrant families who have returned to Mexico, either voluntarily or following removal proceedings, and whose children are U.S. citizens by birthright.

Many of these U.S.-born children do not have proper identity documents, such as a U.S. passport or Mexican birth or residency papers. Without them, they face difficulties in registering for school or accessing medical and other basic services in Mexico.

As many as 600,000 U.S.-citizen minors may find themselves in this situation across Mexico, possibly more. Their growing presence illuminates a concern for governments of both countries: the urgent need to promote the rights of dual citizens in two tightly interwoven societies.

“We don’t know how many U.S. citizens are in Mexico,” says Karin Lang, former chief of the American Citizen Services unit at U.S. Embassy Mexico City. “Homeland Security tracks deportation of Mexicans—around 2.4 million. No one keeps track of the accompanying family members, so we may be underestimating how many U.S.-born kids are here.”

## Getting the Ball Rolling in Mexico

Lang was a key figure in a new initiative launched in Mission Mexico called *Documentate Ya!* (Get Documented!)—a huge undertaking. She received the 2015 Mary Ryan Award for her leadership on documenting binational children.

The goal of *Documentate* is simple: collaborate with Mexican authorities to reach migrant families and help them fully docu-



Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Karin Lang, head of American Citizen Services at Embassy Mexico City, talk with a young U.S. citizen applying for her first passport at a Documentate event in Mexico City, April 2015.

ment their children as dual nationals, so they can enjoy the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in both countries.

The initiative is focused on states with high concentrations of migrants, including Oaxaca, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Michoacán and those along the border. U.S. officials are teaming up with local Mexican immigration, education and health agencies to find migrants through passport fairs, media campaigns and rural outreach programs and equip them with information about how to get documented. The goal is to get migrant families to register their children for a Mexican birth record and a U.S. passport.

But finding migrant families is easier said than done. “This is a very hard population to reach,” says Lang. Fear of engaging with immigration officials (who could initiate removal proceedings), misinformation about further legal consequences for undocumented presence, illiteracy, lack of expertise on immigration law and ignorance of civil rights are all huge barriers to reaching a population that, due to their lack of status in the United States, lives largely in secrecy.

As Lang puts it: “They aren’t about to march into an embassy or consulate or passport agency and let the U.S. government know where they are.”

### The Burden of Under-Documentation

Media attention tends to focus on either the estimated 11.5 million undocumented immigrants living illegally in the United States or on the thousands of migrant children from Central America trying to cross the border.

But the hundreds of thousands of undocumented U.S. citizens living in Mexico have gone largely unnoticed until now. Thanks to

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The hundreds of thousands of undocumented U.S. citizens living in Mexico have gone largely unnoticed until now.

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the mobilization behind Documentate, the issue became one of the talking points between Presidents Barack Obama and Enrique Peña Nieto during their 2015 binational talks—with good reason.

For Mexico, this vast population of under-documented dual nationals represents a growing burden, hampering the country’s socioeconomic growth. Without proper documentation, tens of thousands are shut out of public services; over time, this can drag down the economy because under-documented often means under-schooled. And the correlation among lack of education, poverty and crime is clear: kids who do not finish school are more likely to be poor and more likely to enter a life of crime. This fact is not lost on Mission Mexico, which has pointed out the clear resource implications down the line for the already heavy workload at ACS units across the country.

One case paints a particularly grim picture. As Embassy Mexico City described it, a 12-year-old boy who was born in the United States returned to Mexico when he was 2 years old. Since he was never registered as a Mexican citizen, he could not attend school. He spent his days washing car windows for change at a



MARY RODRIGUEZ/U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Community Relations Officer Andres Rodriguez talks about U.S. passports to a group of Oaxacan migrants on the lawn of a Catholic church in the San Joaquin Valley in California. Many have U.S.-born children.

busy intersection in the capital, coming to the embassy’s attention only when he was hit by a car and killed.

“If you’ve only got a second-grade education, you are more likely to find yourself in trouble, out of a job or in jail,” says Lang. Not only do these kids become part of the consular caseload of vulnerable U.S. citizens in Mexico—they also go back to the United States, where they face difficulties because of their lack of access to education.

### Monterrey: The Starting Point for a Mission-Wide Effort

When former ACS Chief Daisy Cardiel arrived at Consulate General Monterrey in late 2013, she did not realize she was at the start of something big. The local government had just published a report identifying thousands of U.S.-citizen children in the state of Durango who could not attend school because they were not documented as Mexican citizens. The consul general was in shock. “It just erupted. Our consul general was so passionate about the kids who couldn’t get into school or who couldn’t get health benefits,” says Cardiel.

By November 2014, the consulate general had organized a binational conference with Mexican stakeholders—health officials, immigration officers and education experts interested in exploring solutions to the bureaucratic hurdles keeping kids back. The experience became a model for other posts. Consular officers in Tijuana and Nuevo Laredo mobilized migrant conferences to unite local officials and community organizers on both sides of the border. The consulates general in Guadalajara and Hermosillo



OMAR BARRIOS/U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL TIJUANA

Two young U.S. citizens celebrate applying for their first passports at a Documentate fair in the border city of Tijuana, a major hub for returning migrant families.

and U.S. Embassy Mexico City hosted senior-level talks to identify outreach opportunities and administrative solutions at state and federal levels.

The increased collaboration between U.S. consular officers and Mexican officials produced significant results: the Mexican secretary of education relaxed documentation requirements for children entering elementary and middle school.

In consulates across Mexico, information sharing and outreach have mushroomed through local radio and TV and social media. The embassy has more than one million followers on its Facebook page, and has successfully partnered with national celebrities to promote dual nationality.

Consulates and consular agencies have also hosted passport fairs across Mexico, usually organized in collaboration with Mexi-

can state-level migrant assistance agencies that provide application information directly to migrant communities, assist with filling out paperwork and sometimes organize transportation—all formidable obstacles for migrant family members, who often come from lower socioeconomic strata. At the fairs consular officers answer nervous parents' questions about documentation requirements and accept passport applications for the U.S.-born children. Many families tell consular officers they did not understand they could apply for U.S. passports in Mexico; many add that they would never have been able to fill out the forms on their own.

These outreach efforts require hundreds of hours of planning and labor, stretching already tight consular budgets. However, to date, thousands of children have qualified for their U.S. passports through these special events. It is a good start. But when considering the estimated population of 600,000 undocumented U.S.-citizen kids in Mexico, it is just a drop in the bucket.

## North of the Border

As Mission Mexico grapples with how to find migrant families with U.S.-born kids in Mexico, the State Department has been tackling the problem north of the border.

According to Geoff Martineau, the division chief for Western hemisphere affairs in the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of Overseas Citizens Services, the solution lies in the vast communities of migrants already in the United States, many of whom live in the shadow of the law. "What we need to do is turn off the tap of U.S. children going south into Mexico without documents," says Martineau.

From Washington, CA's Office of Passport Services (CA/PPT) works with Martineau's office to amplify the Documentate initiative in the United States—from domestic campaigns in Spanish media to partnering with labor groups and religious organizations in U.S. cities. The State Department recently published a Spanish-language page about applying for passports on its website, [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

But for Martineau, the most promising development is collaboration with Mexican consular officers. "There are 50 Mexican consulates in the United States, and they do vigorous outreach to their citizens on migrant workers' rights. They know where their people are. And we can join with them, because we have the same target population," he points out.

When U.S. passport agencies team up with Mexican consular outreach, the results are significant. Efforts are underway, where possible, to put U.S. passport information in Mexican consular waiting rooms, which has a huge impact. For example, Mexico's Los Angeles consular district alone comprises 1.7 million Mexi-

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The goal of Documentate is simple: collaborate with Mexican authorities to reach migrant families and help them fully document their children as dual nationals.

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cans, and that generates significant foot traffic through the local Mexican consulate.

Much of the U.S. groundwork for the State Department is being carried out by CA/PPT, through Community Relations Officer Andres Rodriguez, and in close coordination with the staffs at the passport agencies and centers. Rodriguez was recently invited to observe a Mexican "consulate on wheels" event that visited a church in Charlottesville, Virginia. He came away deeply impressed.

"They had a small team of people with laptops and printers, and they were doing all the things a consulate does—registering people for Mexican birth certificates, fingerprinting, taking photos and printing passports—all from this community church," reports Rodriguez. The mobile Mexican team issued consular reports of birth abroad to nearly 100 people that day. There are dozens of teams conducting similar consular outreach year-round to reach the millions of Mexicans living in the United States.

Rodriguez is currently working on a strategy for CA/PPT to use its network of U.S. passport agencies to conduct information outreach through community groups who work with migrants, like Catholic Charities, the United Farmworkers Foundation and other migrant community groups. The challenge, he says, is not just putting the message out there; it is finding the right messenger. "These are not people we can just hand a pamphlet or send to a website. That's not going to work," he says. "It has to be one-on-one communication. It comes down to trust. I think the best way to disseminate the message is through trusted third parties."

Rodriguez is on the frontline of a highly contentious issue. At an event he attended in Fresno, California, Rodriguez met with 20 farm workers from Oaxaca, many of whom spoke Spanish as a second language after their native tongue, Mixteca. "I asked them, how many of you have children born in the United States? About 17 people raised their hands. And how many of your kids have a

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U.S. passport? I think there were, maybe, two.”

He spent the next hour explaining how to fill out a passport application and, more importantly, how to protect their children’s rights as dual nationals. He also fielded some difficult questions when it wasn’t clear if the person asking had legal status to be in the United States. “My job is to communicate the passport process to the parents of American citizens,” Rodriguez says. “It’s not my role to crack down on illegal immigration when I am just trying to protect the rights of the child.”

### An Awkward Tension

Under the rights of jus solis, if you are born on U.S. soil, you are a U.S. citizen.

But when illegal immigration is involved, the issue is contentious. Some states have made it difficult for undocumented parents to receive a copy of the U.S. birth certificate of their U.S.-born children. For example, in Texas in 2015 a federal judge ruled that the state may continue to deny U.S. birth certificates to children whose parents present only Mexican consular identification cards. Though the child is a U.S. citizen by birth, the parents are unable to obtain the U.S. birth certificate, leaving the child effectively stateless.

It is therefore no surprise that the government of Mexico has joined numerous civil rights organizations in ongoing court battles in Texas to ensure that children born in the United States can be documented as U.S. citizens.

Given the politicized nature of the immigration issue, some people might ask, how does the U.S. government justify actively seeking out the U.S.-born children of migrants while turning a blind eye to the parents’ legal status? For CA’s Geoff Martineau, there is no ambiguity: “This is 100 percent the right thing to do. These are American kids. And a little effort now saves a lot of problems later.”

Through the dedicated efforts of passionate individuals across Mexico and the United States, Documentate is creating a paradigm shift in binational culture, where government authorities on both sides of the border are working together to address an issue close to home. For Karin Lang, this binational partnership is key to forming a new vision of how we see these migrant children.

“We need to be moving away from looking at people as either U.S. or Mexican citizens to be served by either one government or the other, and moving toward acknowledging the growing numbers who are citizens of both countries and likely to live on both sides of the border,” Lang says.

Considering the massive costs of under-documentation, it is in the best interest of both nations to do so. ■

## High School Essay Contest Winner Visits Washington



STATE DEPARTMENT/MICHAEL GROSS

AFSA essay contest winner Dylan Borne receives his certificates from Secretary of State John Kerry. During their meeting, Sec. Kerry spoke with the Borne family in French and accepted a gift from Dylan showcasing the culinary talents of his native New Orleans.

On Aug. 1, Secretary of State John F. Kerry presented Dylan Borne, a rising senior from Benjamin Franklin Charter High School in New Orleans, Louisiana, with the 2016 American Foreign Service Association National High School Essay Contest award.

In AFSA's 2016 essay contest, students had to imagine themselves as members of the U.S. Foreign Service, and then find a peacebuilding solution to a particular conflict or crisis that threatens U.S. interests abroad.

In the East Hall of the State Department, Secretary Kerry congratulated Dylan on his outstanding essay and spent some time questioning the student about the logistics of his solution for peace in Afghanistan.

In his paper, Dylan put himself in the shoes of an economic officer in the USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. He argues that a program to distribute laptops to civil society organizations and individuals in Afghanistan would give local women greater access to educational resources, the ability to start and grow businesses to improve their economic stability and become agents of change in a country where they are often overlooked.

Each year, AFSA flies the contest winner and their parents to Washington, D.C., for discussions with foreign policy leaders from AFSA, the United States Institute of Peace, the State Department and Capitol Hill. Dylan was accompanied by his parents, Dr. David Borne

and Dr. Annette Sojic, and his sister, Sophie Borne.

AFSA partners with the Semester at Sea study abroad program and USIP to sponsor the essay contest and support the significant prizes offered. In addition to the two-day trip to Washington, Dylan received \$2,500 and a full-tuition-paid voyage with Semester at Sea on his enrollment at an accredited university.

In addition, Dylan's high school received 10 copies of AFSA's introduction to the Foreign Service, *Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work* (Foreign Service Books, 2011).

Dylan was particularly excited about the chance to spend a college term traveling the world while studying. "An international education at

*Continued on page 58*

## CALENDAR

October 3  
AFSA/Public Diplomacy Council: "Connecting the U.S. and Asia"

October 5  
12-1:30 p.m.  
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

October 6  
2-4:30 p.m.  
Everything You Need to Know About the TSP

October 9-14  
AFSA Road Scholar Program  
Chautauqua, N.Y.

October 10  
Columbus Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed

October 12  
2-3:30 p.m.  
What Is the Purpose?  
360 Feedback in the Foreign Service

October 23-27  
AFSA Road Scholar Program  
Washington, D.C.

October 28  
Job Search Program  
Graduation Reception at FSI

November 2  
12-1:30 p.m.  
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

November 6-10  
AFSA Road Scholar Program  
Washington, D.C.

November 7  
AFSA/Public Diplomacy Council: "How China Is Covering the U.S. Election"

November 11  
Veterans Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed

November 18  
AFSA Scholarship Applications for 2017-18 Academic Year Available

November 24-25  
Thanksgiving:  
AFSA Offices Closed



## The Human Touch

Bureaucracies aren't known for compassion, flexibility or a commitment to do everything within reason to help their employees thrive. This is often the case even when some of the decision-makers are caring individuals who want to help—the bureaucracy just wears them down and makes it so hard to effect change that they eventually stop trying. (Don't worry, I'm not there yet!)

This tendency can be exacerbated in an organization like the Foreign Service, which is characterized by three trends: it is highly competitive to enter, it is consistently ranked one of the best places to work and attrition remains low.

Under these conditions, managers can easily lull themselves into complacency and inertia, based on the assumption that the career is so prized and employees love their jobs so much that they will never leave, no matter how they are treated or how many personal sacrifices they must make.

To some extent that may be true—otherwise, attrition would be higher. But what about the unseen statistic, the number of employees who remain but become less engaged, less satisfied and more resentful?

We all know at least one colleague (or perhaps we

are that colleague) who has struggled so much with the bureaucracy that, even when things are resolved favorably, they continue to experience a bitter aftertaste.

The employee who faces pressure from her office to return to work too soon after having a baby; the tandem couple who has to do one tour after another apart; the parent of a child with special needs who dreads bidding on overseas posts because of the bureaucratic hoops; the single parent who is in an essential position at a post that goes on drawdown; the LGBT employee who wants to serve in a country where his or her spouse would not be officially recognized; the single employee trying to navigate eldercare; the employee whose EFM spouse has been unable to find meaningful work for multiple tours—these individuals are assets into which the Foreign Service has invested a great deal of training and money.

It is heartbreaking to see and hear them agonize over how much more they can take, and whether it is worth it to stay with an organization that does not appear to value them. Part of the culture shift toward humanizing our bureaucracy involves leaders and managers recognizing our human needs outside of work in a

### Leaders can and should empower managers to take the most human interpretation of the rules, while still upholding the letter and spirit.

way that makes us stronger and more engaged on the job.

I've seen the department do a wonderful job with certain individual cases. Unfortunately, not everybody knows how to navigate the system to achieve those kinds of results, nor should they have to.

I'd like to see a Foreign Service where the leadership acknowledges that our people are our best asset and that disengaged, distracted, cynical employees will contribute far less. From the top, there needs to be clear instructions to "the bureaucracy" to work with people and find compassionate solutions, not to point reflexively to the FAM and say something isn't possible, end of story.

While some regulations are government wide and cannot be changed unilaterally by the State Department, others are eligible for negotiation and revision, should policymakers deem the issue sufficiently important.

In some cases, revision isn't necessary; a more flexible interpretation would do

the trick. Leaders can and should empower managers to take the most human interpretation of the rules, while still upholding the letter and spirit.

It's not enough, however, for policymakers to issue such declarations and then return to their daily tasks, assuming that everything will now change.

If they want the implementing offices to take action, they need to remain involved, send representatives to working group meetings, emphasize the need for creative solutions and outside-the-box thinking, ask for progress reports, engage when working-level employees cannot find a solution and constantly remind managers both here and abroad that the Foreign Service cannot achieve its important work without the full, loyal support of its employees.

We need to invest as much time into helping our employees thrive personally as we do to ensure they thrive professionally.

What a wonderful Foreign Service that would be. ■



## Taking Care of Our People

The responsibility for “Duty of Care” is a topic currently gaining momentum within the federal government, and one that has great significance for USAID FSOs given the security concerns, the round-the-clock nature of foreign affairs, and the significant personal sacrifices that USAID FSOs and their families are required to make.

The 2014 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review highlighted USAID’s pledge to “take care of its people.” The reality that service in high-stress environments and its foreseeable consequences (see “The Cost of Longer CPC Tours” in the October 2014 *FSJ*) has become the norm for USAID FSOs led the agency to commission an independent study to help guide their next steps.

The report on that study, prepared by Greenleaf Integrative Strategies and titled “Stress and Resilience Issues Affecting USAID Personnel in High Operational Stress Environments” (<http://bit.ly/2dhTktz>), was released last September. (See discussion of the report in Talking Points, January-February 2016 *FSJ*.)

The study’s storyline took a twist when the findings revealed that the primary sources of stress identified by USAID personnel were related to institutional

factors, not external contextual factors. In other words, USAID has created its own high-stress environment, regardless of where one serves.

The building blocks of the high-stress, in-house environment have been internal practices, employed over many years, such as neglecting to hire sufficient numbers of Foreign Service officers and declining to provide adequate training and opportunity at all levels of the Foreign Service career (despite the Foreign Service Act of 1980’s mandate to do so in sec. 703: Career Development).

USAID has strayed from its foundational responsibility as a foreign affairs agency—namely to recruit and champion its FSOs. The results of the stress and resilience assessment clearly reveal how an otherwise honorable agency like USAID could rank as low as it does in the federal employee viewpoint surveys.

The Greenleaf study opens with this observation by a medical unit employee: “USAID personnel are the most stressed population from among the various agencies at post.”

It goes on to identify the top sources of stress at USAID: **1—Heavy Workload/Pace** (i.e. inadequate staffing); **2—Leadership Deficits** (e.g., failure to defend

## USAID has strayed from its foundational responsibility as a foreign affairs agency—to recruit and champion its FSOs.

USAID institutional interests in interagency forums); **3—Inadequate Management** (e.g., lack of personnel and team-based management skills); and **4—Poor Supervision** (e.g., deficient in prioritization of tasks and feedback).

Because USAID is undergoing a transformation in its Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, the time is right to address the foundational weaknesses described in this study. I believe a direct line can be drawn from the well-worn practices of deficient workforce planning, budgeting and training to the near-default filling of the resultant agency gaps with temporary, non-career

staff (often program-funded due to insufficient operating expense budget) and the distressing results we see in this assessment. Correcting these damaging business practices and changing what has become culture will require agency top leadership to drive the course, but it is possible.

A system that transparently and accurately articulates USAID’s hiring, training and career pathing needs to “take care of its people”. That must be among the highest of priorities towards meeting its development goals. Our people are our greatest asset. ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FAS VP. Contact: mark.petry@fas.usda.gov or (202) 720-2502

## Realistic Expectations

The Foreign Agricultural Service can be proud of the steps taken to recognize and fix the hiring process to bring in the right number of qualified new Foreign Service trainees. But we still have a problem.

New employees are confused and uncertain about what to expect from their new career, especially when it concerns the frequency of overseas deployment. Miscommunication is a potentially dangerous drag on morale; both sides need to listen more carefully to each other.

We need to ensure that FAS provides the leadership, ongoing education and experiences to make the most of our new group of employees. One way I suggest that we do that is to manage career expectations as part of the renewed and reinvigorated culture within FAS. Effective communication by manage-

ment to help new employees create realistic expectations is paramount in minimizing attrition.

Unrealistic views of the FAS career path are problematic because qualified employees have many other options and opportunities and may not be willing to wait around if their expectations go unfulfilled. For example, new officers should not expect three or more consecutive overseas assignments, although that is not uncommon amongst officers in our currently depleted top ranks.

New employees' concerns about the timing and quality of first and second postings are most pressing and immediate, but their overall expectations also don't reflect reality. The reality is that Washington tours will be and should be a more integral part of a full FAS career.

Management is trying

### New employees are confused and uncertain about what to expect from their new career, especially when it concerns the frequency of overseas deployment.

to communicate on these issues, but the message isn't resonating because it is too vague. Management must be able to better articulate its vision of a modern FAS Foreign Service corps, especially what common career paths will look like and the career choices employees will encounter.

The new employees need to hear and understand that their future career paths will likely be different than those of the current senior officers. However, "different" does not mean "less rewarding." The story about the FAS Foreign Service must be accurate

and make for a compelling career of service; but it must also be realistic.

Management needs to be more specific about what a career starting from today's junior level looks like, while new employees need to take off their rose-colored glasses and be willing to really listen.

If management and new employees continue to talk past each other, employees happy to have just joined are bound to be alienated. Attrition is a part of any workplace, but it shouldn't be the result of miscommunication or divergent expectations. ■

### NEWS BRIEF

#### AFSA SECURES AWARDS FUNDING

AFSA is pleased to announce that the association has secured 10 years of funding for a number of annual performance and dissent awards.

Two agreements cover the M. Juanita Guess Award for Exemplary Performance by a Community Liaison Officer and the Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy.

We thank our partners and funders: Clements Worldwide, Dr. Sushma Palmer and the Palmer family, respectively. We greatly appreciate their support for AFSA and these awards.

The awards are presented at AFSA's annual awards ceremony, which takes place in June of each year. For more information on AFSA's awards program, and how to nominate deserving colleagues, please visit [www.afsa.org/awards](http://www.afsa.org/awards). ■



## Turbulence in Long-Term Care Insurance

Insurance against the incapacities of advanced age is a brilliant idea. Financial advisers agree it should be part of every family's financial plan. The problem is that even after more than 30 years, providers of the product have not been able to price it properly.

Initially, companies in the business made actuarial assumptions that did not survive the test of reality. They were wrong about client experience (people smart enough to buy long-term care insurance were smart enough to maintain their coverage), about life expectancy (more people are living longer into the incapacity stage) and about the value of reserves, which has suffered unpredictable and dramatic reductions in recent years.

Thirty years ago, no one, repeat no one, could have, or did, predict that interest rates would go to near zero and remain there for at least a decade. The insurance business model is based on collecting premiums, aggregating these funds in reserves and then obtaining a 4- to 5-percent safe return on U.S. bonds to build reserves to pay future claims. A decade of the Federal Reserve's low-rate policy has smashed this business plan.

The result is serious under-pricing of long-term

care (LTC) policies. Many companies—including the likes of GE and American Express—have entered and left the business. Few companies continue to offer this product, and some of them are in a weakened financial condition. The problems are industry-wide.

Now comes the John Hancock Life & Health Insurance Co., the only insurer willing to bid on the Office of Personnel Management's LTC program, with a recently negotiated contract with OPM that continues the federal LTC program, but with huge price increases—in some cases more than double. Federal employee policyholders and their unions are outraged and demanding action.

Here are the realities with which these demands will have to contend. First, virtually all LTC policies have seen their premiums double in recent years. It is not only federal employees who are affected. It is always problematic for public sector unions to "demand" benefits not available to other citizens.

Second, the federal government can neither order John Hancock to offer these policies at a loss nor, indeed, to remain in the business. There is no "high government official"—or congressional committee, for that matter—that can direct a

solution. Any changes will have to be negotiated.

Third, there is a worst-case scenario, and that is that John Hancock simply withdraws from the business rather than renegotiating the deal with OPM. In that case, barring a congressional bailout (for which I see no appetite on the Hill), federal employees would be faced with entering the open market at their current ages. That would probably involve even higher outlays than John Hancock proposes.

Well then, what is the solution, however imperfect? First, maintain the pressure on OPM and John Hancock. Who knows whether OPM actuaries got the best deal available or whether John Hancock has some room for compromise?

Second, LTC policies have many variables (e.g., cost, length of coverage, details of coverage, inflation adjustments and other bells and whistles). Moreover, every individual family's needs are different. These variables offer real scope for policyholders to take a hard look at costs and benefits as applied individually.

I understand that John Hancock and OPM have offered individual counseling. As this is written, AFSA is negotiating for such counselors to come to our headquarters to assist our

retired members who hold these policies. Individual adjustments may well be possible.

Third, affected AFSA members should check the open markets in their states. State insurance regulators can make a positive difference. I am a Virginian, and my LTC premium has doubled.

However, my LTC provider, Genworth Financial, raised my rates sharply in 2014. Under guidance from the Virginia Bureau of Insurance, the increase was phased in over three years, with no additional increases until at least 2018. In other words, the market in your state may be more user-friendly than the federal program.

It has become axiomatic that we are entering a new economic era. Turbulence, the duration and details of which we cannot know, will be the norm. Gaining knowledge of these changes and patience and creativity in dealing with them will be critical. The LTC situation is both example and harbinger. ■



(l-r) AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, Assistant USAID Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict & Humanitarian Assistance David Harden, Dylan Borne, USIP President Nancy Lindborg and AFSA USAID Vice President Sharon Wayne attend a reception for the essay contest winner at USIP headquarters in Washington, D.C.

*Essay Winners*  
Continued from page 53

the caliber that Semester at Sea offers is definitely one of the best college experiences," he said "I am very excited to embark on that educational voyage."

Prior to meeting with Secretary Kerry, Dylan and his family joined representatives from AFSA, USIP and Semester at Sea for a luncheon at AFSA headquarters hosted by AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson.

In the afternoon, a reception was held in Dylan's honor at the U.S. Institute of Peace, hosted by USIP President Nancy Lindborg. During the reception, Dylan met with Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield and Assistant USAID Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict & Humanitarian Assistance David Harden.

In remarks to attendees, Amb. Stephenson congratulated Dylan on his achievements and expressed her

hope that AFSA's fruitful partnership with USIP would continue. She also noted the success of this contest in engaging young people and educating them about the role of the Foreign Service in protecting and serving American interests abroad.

In his speech, Dylan explained that he had been drawn to AFSA's essay contest because of the emphasis on peacebuilding solutions in the essay prompt. Addressing the contest sponsors, he said: "I would like to thank AFSA, USIP and Semester at Sea for your sponsorship of this contest and the work you do every day to show the next generation that peace is not peripheral, it is a central goal for humankind."

During his visit, Dylan and his family also enjoyed an exclusive tour of the Capitol and met with legislative staff from his home state of Louisiana.

AFSA also congratulates this year's runner up, Whitney Zhang, a senior at Dr. TJ



AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston presents a certificate to essay contest runner-up Whitney Zhang at AFSA headquarters

Owens Gilroy Early College Academy in Gilroy, California. Whitney received her certificate from AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston during a visit to Washington, D.C., on July 12.

Whitney's essay presented the perspective of a Foreign Service member stationed in Pakistan, who works with the Bureau of Energy Resources in an effort to help solve that country's energy crisis. Whitney urged organizations such as USAID and the World Bank Group to invest in Pakistan's quest for clean and sustainable energy using private-public partnerships.

AFSA also arranged for Whitney to meet her congressional representative, Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.). Lofgren and Whitney discussed a variety of issues including gun control, homelessness and immigration.

The runner-up receives \$1,250 and a full scholarship to attend the International Diplomacy Program of the

National Student Leadership Conference, AFSA's other partner for the contest, in Washington, D.C.

AFSA created the National High School Essay Contest in 1999 to encourage students to learn about the work of the Foreign Service and the significance of diplomacy to national security and prosperity. The contest continues to increase awareness of the Foreign Service among high school students across the nation.

This year, AFSA received more than 700 entries from 43 states and seven countries. In addition to the winner and runner-up, we congratulate the 23 students who received honorable mentions.

The 2016 winners and their essays, as well as the honorable mentions, can be found at [www.afsa.org/essay](http://www.afsa.org/essay).

The 2017 essay topic was posted on the AFSA website in September. More information about the rules and guidelines of the contest can be found here: [www.afsa.org/rules-and-guidelines](http://www.afsa.org/rules-and-guidelines).

We encourage AFSA members to reach out to their high schools and provide information about this contest to eligible students.

If you are interested in serving as a judge for next year's contest or have further questions, please contact AFSA Awards Coordinator Perri Green at [green@afsa.org](mailto:green@afsa.org).

—Gemma Dvorak,  
Associate Editor,  
with Eunice Ajayi,  
Awards Intern

## “One of the Best Decisions I’ve Made” —A TLG Intern’s Experience

Each year, AFSA partners with the Thursday Luncheon Group to sponsor a minority college student for a summer internship at the Department of State. TLG’s mission is to increase the participation of African Americans and other minorities in the formulation, articulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. The internship helps reach students who may not otherwise hear about possible foreign affairs careers like the Foreign Service.

This year Camille Swinson spent 10 weeks interning with the Office of Brazil and Southern Cone Affairs in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Camille is currently in her senior year at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia.



TLG intern Camille Swinson meets with AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson.

Camille attended many different events and discussions, prepared summaries for WHA/BSC staff and assembled documents for the assistant secretary. She says that she particularly enjoyed tasks under the umbrella of public

diplomacy, as they allowed her to see the mechanisms used to cultivate strong ties between the United States and other countries.

Camille also used her summer in Washington, D.C., to visit think-tanks and

local groups to gain other perspectives. In July she had a chance to meet with AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson for an informal chat about life in the Foreign Service.

During her internship she was able to see firsthand how important changes are effected every day through diplomacy, Camille says, and this has encouraged her to pursue a career in the Foreign Service.

The internship also gave her an insight into the skills required in a Foreign Service career, and ways in which she can cultivate those skills for herself. These experiences, she said, “will not only allow me to grow into a better diplomat but also a more competent global citizen.”

Camille says she is particularly grateful to the Thursday Luncheon Group, because they have enabled her to access mentors of color, Foreign Service officers who can provide insight into navigating the Foreign Service as a minority individual.

“Interning at State under TLG has easily been one of the best decisions I have made during my college career. I grew a lot, learned a great deal about diplomacy,” says Camille. “Once I become a diplomat, I hope to serve as an equally helpful resource to students.” ■

—Gemma Dvorak,  
Associate Editor

## FLTCIP Counseling at AFSA

In July, the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) sent enrollees letters announcing dramatic increases in premiums, included a “2016 Enrollee Decision Period” packet of personalized options and gave a Sept. 30 deadline for decisions on coverage.

AFSA wrote to Congress to call for hearings on the steep premium hikes and worked to provide accurate, constructive information to members via special email

messages, online newsletters and the AFSA website.

With many AFSA retiree members struggling over their FLTCIP decisions, AFSA scheduled one-on-one counseling sessions for them with LTC Partners on Sept. 9.

Twenty-nine enrollees attended a session at AFSA HQ to review their choices with an experienced LTC Partners counselor. Virtually every attendee found at least one option that would work for their circumstances and exited their session with

confidence.

We are pleased that so many of our members found the sessions helpful. Feedback included comments such as “Extremely helpful!” and “Great advice; I’m in good shape.” We recommend that all FLTCIP enrollees should talk with an LTC Partners counselor over the phone before making a final determination about coverage.

Email [retiree@afsa.org](mailto:retiree@afsa.org) or call (202) 944-5509 for more information. ■

## AFSA Interns Visit Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina



COURTESY OF IRMA ZEJCIROVIC

AFSA interns visiting the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Washington, D.C. (l-r) AFSA Awards Coordinator Perri Green; Deputy Chief of Mission Milenko Misic; AFSA interns Alyssa Godfrey, Vanessa Sorrentino, Orienne Gonzalez and Martin Vasev; Minister Counselor Amra Hadzovic; AFSA intern Eunice Ajayi and Counselor Marino Avramovic.

On July 28, AFSA's summer 2016 interns (Eunice Ajayi, Martin Vasev, Alyssa Godfrey, Orienne Gonzalez and Vanessa Sorrentino) visited the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where they

met Deputy Chief of Mission Milenko Misic, Minister Counselor Amra Hadzovic and Assistant to the Ambassador Irma Zejcirovic.

Organized by Awards Coordinator Perri Green, the

field trip was part of AFSA's program to give its interns an introduction to real-life diplomacy.

DCM Misic, who had only arrived at the embassy the week before, spoke to the group about his route to foreign affairs and the highlights of his career so far. Originally a mechanical engineer, he returned to university to gain his master's degree and began his diplomatic career in 1998.

Ms. Hadzovic has served as the minister counselor in the embassy for three years, where she acts as a resource for the more than 350,000 citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who live in the United States. In addition to issuing passports and visas, she helps citizens with problems they encounter while living abroad.

AFSA's interns also talked with Irma Zejcirovic, who has

served as assistant to the ambassador since March. She is a graduate student at The George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, studying European and Eurasian affairs. She shared her unique perspective as a dual citizen of the United States and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After coffee and informal discussion, the embassy staff briefed the interns on the history, geography and political system of the country, as well as the different tourist attractions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

AFSA presented a copy of *Inside A US Embassy*, AFSA's popular introduction to the U.S. Foreign Service, to DCM Misic as a token of appreciation for their hospitality. ■

—Vanessa Sorrentino,  
Advocacy Intern

## Career Ambassadors Discuss AFSA Legislative Strategy



AFSA/ORIENNE GONZALEZ

On July 18, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson hosted a group of distinguished career ambassadors to discuss AFSA's legislative strategy and policy messaging on the Hill. (l-r) Ambassador Tim Carney, Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, Professional Policy Issues Director Maria Livingston, Ambassadors (ret.) Marcie Ries, Ruth A. Davis, Earl Anthony (Tony) Wayne, AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston, Ambassador (ret.) Gillian Milovanovic.

## AFSA Hosts Diplomats in Residence



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson chats with Stewart Devine (DIR at the University of Denver) and Anne Callaghan (DIR at the University of New Mexico).

On July 27, AFSA welcomed more than 25 Diplomats in Residence to a reception at AFSA headquarters.

DIRs are career Foreign Service officers based at universities across the United States, each covering a particular region of the country. They provide guidance and advice on foreign affairs careers, internships and fellowships to students and professionals in the regions where they serve. Current Governing Board member Josh Glazeroff is the coordinator for the State Department's DIR program.

A valuable resource, DIRs are available to answer questions and share insight with those interested in a Foreign Service career. For more information and to find your nearest Diplomat in Residence, visit the State Department website, [www.careers.state.gov/connect/dir](http://www.careers.state.gov/connect/dir). ■



(l-r) Floyd Cable, DIR at University of Texas at Austin; Vayram Nyadroh, Chicago; AFSA Outreach Coordinator Catherine Kannenberg; Rich Jaworski, DIR at Duke University and University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; Andrew Mann, DIR at University of Michigan; Kali Jones, DIR at Tulane University.



Robert Neus (DIR at University of Illinois at Chicago) chats with Dorothy Ngutter (DIR at University of California, Berkeley) at the Diplomats in Residence reception.

## A Q&A with the Foreign Service Grievance Board

*The Foreign Service Grievance Board exists to resolve individual grievances brought by members of the Foreign Service, ensuring the fullest measure of due process for FS employees.*

*Employees who have a complaint about certain aspects of their employment may submit a grievance to their agency outlining their concerns and including any provisions of law, regulation or policy they believe have been violated or misapplied.*

*For a list of common grievances, visit the AFSA website [www.afsa.org/grievance-guidance](http://www.afsa.org/grievance-guidance). If the employee's grievance is not resolved to her/his satisfaction at the agency level, the employee may appeal to the Foreign Service Grievance Board. Please note that former employees may file a grievance only with respect to an alleged denial of an allowance, premium pay or other financial benefit.*

*FSGB members are appointed by the Secretary of State from nominees approved by AFSA and the foreign affairs agencies and adjudicate from 43 (2015) to 126 (2011) appeals in a year. The board currently consists of 17 members, with a mix of professional arbitrators and retired Foreign Service employees.*

*AFSA, through our Labor Management team, frequently assists members with FSGB appeals. In this*

*Q&A, the Chairman of the FSGB, Garber Davidson, answers some common questions about the board's functions and relationship with AFSA. Chairman Davidson is a lawyer with extensive experience in international economic development. He was a Senior Foreign Service officer at USAID, where he served both overseas and in Washington as an agency lawyer. Mr. Davidson served as AFSA's USAID vice president from 1994 to 1996. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1996 and has served as FSGB chairman since October 2011.*

### **Q: Who can bring a case to the FSGB?**

**A:** The Foreign Service Act of 1980 determines the Foreign Service Grievance Board's jurisdiction, both as to who may bring a case and what about. You have to be a current or former member of the Foreign Service—whether tenured (“career”), untenured (“career candidate”), on a limited appointment (as is the case with some security agents and visa adjudicators, for example), an eligible family member or a retiree to bring a case. Former members of the Service may only grieve financial issues.

It is important to understand that, with the exception of separation-for-cause cases, the FSGB only takes cases on appeal. So the board will only hear cases

that have already been denied at the agency level. Most grievances are resolved at the agency level, however, so the FSGB never sees them. For the past several years the board has received about 50 to 60 cases annually, from the Department of State, USAID, the Foreign Commercial Service, Peace Corps and the Foreign Agricultural Service.

### **Q: How big is the FSGB, and what are the backgrounds of the members selected to serve on it?**

**A:** The FSGB currently has 17 members, about two-thirds of them annuitants of the foreign affairs agencies and one-third attorneys with employment law expertise or judicial experience. The make-up of the board is subject to change, as members come up for renewal every two years and renewal is not automatic.

Currently the ranks include two former ambassadors, two senior judges from the District of Columbia's Superior Court, a former chief administrative law judge at the Department of Labor, a former deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of Human Resources, a former director of performance evaluation at the Department of State, and retired Senior Foreign Service officers from USAID and Commerce. Not all members of the board

have formal legal training, but they have the option to receive research support from a part-time contract appeals counsel, a retired FS veteran of USAID's Office of the General Counsel.

### **Q: How well informed is the FSGB about the Foreign Service experience, its uniqueness and its challenges?**

**A:** The majority of board members have served full Foreign Service careers. But the Service is an evolving institution, so FSGB staff make sure the members receive key announcements and Office of the Inspector General and news reports, and speakers are invited to quarterly meetings and for brown-bag lunches to discuss current issues affecting Foreign Service careers. Three of the five full-time staff positions are filled by active-duty Foreign Service members.

### **Q: What are some features of the FSGB that differentiate it from other adjudicatory institutions?**

**A:** The power the FSGB has that is most appreciated by grievants is that of being able to order interim relief while the appeal is being considered. So, for example, the board can order an agency to postpone disciplining an individual while it considers whether the penalty is fair. Also, if both the agency

and grievant agree to it, the FSGB can offer free, non-binding mediation by one of the board members in lieu of taking a case through to a board panel decision on the merits.

**Q: What are some typical remedies the FSGB is authorized to order?**

**A:** The board can order payment of allowances that were denied in error. Sometimes an agency is ordered to reconsider a penalty in light of a finding that one or more specifications in a discipline case were unsubstantiated. Fairly regularly the board orders reconstituted promotion panels to consider the files of grievants who have proven some sort of irregularity and resulting harm in how they were reviewed by the regular panels.

The board can order that part or all of an employee evaluation be expunged if a preponderance of the evidence shows that it contained inaccuracies or prejudicial language. On rare occasions the FSGB recommends that the Secretary of State effect tenuring or a promotion. Significantly, from the standpoint of ensuring due process, the agency can also be ordered to pay attorney fees to a successful party's legal representative.

**Q: What does the FSGB do to protect grievants' privacy?**

**A:** The Code of Federal Regulations instructs the board to make decisions available so as to allow the agencies, AFSA and Foreign Service members to be aware of the kinds of cases we receive and how we resolve them—"without invading the privacy of the grievants." Personally identifiable information (PII) such as birth dates, home addresses and Social Security numbers is redacted from filings, as are grievants' names and postings from all decisions and orders included on the FSGB public website.

It is not a fail-safe system, and occasionally something slips through. If it is noted that PII has been found on the website ([www.fsgb.gov](http://www.fsgb.gov)), the offending document is removed and thoroughly scrubbed before re-posting.

**Q: How long does it take to get a decision from the FSGB?**

**A:** That depends on many factors, not all of which are within the board's control. The "discovery" phase, where the parties can request answers to questions and production of documents and witness testimony from each other, can take quite a bit of time. Sometimes there are sub-disputes about how much each side will provide, and

this can drag out resolution of the larger case.

Other times the board itself is divided on how to rule in a case and spends many hours, over weeks or months, debating the relevant facts or law before coming to a consensus view—or not, in which case a member may dissent from the majority opinion. It is difficult to generalize, but on average an appeal that the parties have not been able to settle among themselves takes about nine months from filing to decision.

**Q: What have been some of the FSGB's most influential rulings? Have any decisions substantially changed the way the foreign affairs agencies operate?**

**A:** The FSGB has been especially concerned to ensure that full procedural protections apply to all kinds of evaluations, not just conventional Employee Evaluation Reports and their equivalents in the other foreign affairs agencies. For example, the board has held supplemental evaluations on non-tenured officers at USAID and Inspector's Evaluation Reports on senior leaders at State to similar standards as regular evaluations in terms of adequate counseling, notice and opportunity to improve performance, ensuring that everyone from the bottom

to the top of the Service hierarchy enjoys due process at appraisal time.

**Q: How does the FSGB work with AFSA?**

**A:** AFSA, as the exclusive representative for nearly all Foreign Service members, has the option to intervene in grievance appeals even when an AFSA staffer isn't directly advising the grievant. The FSGB routinely copies AFSA on all correspondence with agency representatives and grievants, including cases where a grievant has retained a private attorney. Also, Chapter 22 of the U.S. Code assigns the FSGB the role of arbitrator in deciding disputes between the agencies and AFSA regarding the interpretation of their collective bargaining agreement provisions.

The board's decisions in these so-called implementation disputes—such as those about the payment of Meritorious Service Increases—are subject only to limited review by the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board. The FSGB works collegially with AFSA and the agencies. Over years of working together to protect employee rights and smooth employee relations, AFSA and FSGB staffs have developed cordial relationships that transcend the contentiousness of any given dispute. ■

## Beyond the Beltway: Foreign Service Retirees Across the Country

You don't have to be in the D.C. area to stay involved —AFSA keeps in touch with 17 associations of Foreign Service retirees covering 15 states and New England. These groups meet regularly, often featuring luncheon speakers. Here, we look at a few of the most active groups.

The **Texas group (Austin-based)** has featured renowned academic experts and authors speaking to members on American foreign policy issues.

On June 14, Ambassador Tom Boyatt, AFSA's VP for Retirees and chair of the American Academy of Diplomacy's "American Diplomacy at Risk" Committee, impressed his Texan audience with a presentation on the increasing politicization of the Foreign Service and its threatened capacity to serve as a critical component of America's front line of defense.

The group, which averages more than 40 participants at each of its five luncheons during the year, will conclude 2016 with its Fun Festival, featuring the funniest, craziest TV/cinema ads of the year. The Austin group is not the only group in Texas, either; **San Antonio's FS Retiree** group draws close to 40 members to its monthly networking luncheons.

In May, the **New England group** featured Ambassador

Larry Pope in York Harbor, Maine, speaking on the need to raise awareness of the fact that career Foreign Service professionals are essential to advance American interests overseas. The group's October luncheon will be held in Quechee, Vermont.

**Maryland's group** regularly draws 50 to 75 for its monthly, reasonably priced gourmet lunch meetings, which have featured, among other speakers, Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-Md, who was raised in an FS family); Ambassador (ret.) Tom Pickering and the Deputy Chief of Mission from the German embassy in Washington, D.C.

The **Northern Virginia group** boasts about 100 members, with 20 to 50 attending its five luncheons annually in Arlington, though last January's presentation by former NSA and CIA Director General Michael Hayden exceeded the average by far. **Utah's group** meets monthly for lunch or dinner—its last meeting featured a presentation on the history of dissent in the Foreign Service.

The **Minnesota-based "Upper Midwest Chapter"** has recently featured some "big draw" luncheon speakers. In May, former Vice President (and Ambassador to Japan) Walter Mondale had high praise for the Foreign Service, saying America's

career diplomats were the most dedicated and able group of people he'd worked with in his long career.

In June, Amb. Pickering spoke to the chapter about his work promoting the Foreign Service as president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, and also about the complex diplomacy and politics of the nuclear deal with Iran.

Dick Virden, who retired from the Foreign Service in 2004 and coordinates the Minnesota group, likes to set the record straight: "There's a lot of life and engagement out there beyond the Beltway!"

You can find your closest FS Retiree Group in AFSA's 2016 Retiree Directory (see pages 34-35). Or go to "Get Involved" at [www.afsa.org/afsa-retiree-services](http://www.afsa.org/afsa-retiree-services). Not close enough? Organize a group in your area.

You can find fellow FS retirees in the Directory. Or log into your profile page on [www.afsa.org](http://www.afsa.org) and click on Member Directory, where you can search for retirees in your area. While there, you can also click on the online AFSA Community, which enables you to stay connected and involved with all AFSA members worldwide.

If you're a member of a retiree group, please contact AFSA and let us know what you are doing. Send your

thoughts to the membership team at [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org).

### CHECK YOUR FEGLI COVERAGE

In a posting to the online AFSA Community relating his ordeal getting the Office of Personnel Management to correct his death benefit, one AFSA retiree urged members to "check with FEGLI to obtain *in writing* the level of your life insurance."

As of two years ago, OPM no longer shares FEGLI cases with State's Office of Retirement; retirees must contact OPM directly.

There are three ways to do this: (1) Log on to Retirement Services Online to view and print your verification of life insurance (VOLI); (2) Email [retire@opm.gov](mailto:retire@opm.gov) to request your VOLI, and include your retirement claim number or claim status inquiry number (CSI) in your email; or (3) Call 1 (888) 767-6738 between 7:40 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, M-F. Call early as the line is often busy.

If you can't locate your CSI number, contact the Human Resources Service Center in Charleston—[HRSC@state.gov](mailto:HRSC@state.gov) or (866) 300-7419. Let us know how you fare—[retiree@afsa.org](mailto:retiree@afsa.org) or (202) 944-5509. We recommend that you keep a record of your FEGLI coverage in a safe place and give copies to your spouse and children. ■

## AFSA Celebrates Job Search Program Graduates



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson congratulates Job Search Program graduates at the reception, held at the Foreign Service Institute.

On Aug. 26, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson spoke to 110 graduates of the State Department's Job Search Program at a champagne reception hosted by AFSA at the Foreign Service Institute.

Congratulating the group of retirees, Amb. Stephenson noted that most retirees do not realize that their AFSA membership does not transfer automatically on retirement and encouraged the Foreign Service graduates to reaffirm their AFSA membership and continue their access to a large and growing network.

Pointing out the importance of growing the Foreign Service community, Amb. Stephenson also asked graduates to consider themselves part of a Foreign Service "alumni team," with a responsibility to tell the American people about their experiences representing

the United States as a diplomat abroad.

More than 60 members of the class joined AFSA or reaffirmed their membership. In addition to the annual retiree directory, AFSA retiree membership includes access to AFSA's online forum, dedicated retiree counseling and a bi-monthly newsletter, as well as a subscription to *The Foreign Service Journal*.

AFSA USAID Vice President Sharon Wayne, AFSA Governing Board member and Retiree Representative Dean Haas, AFSA Secretary Bill Haugh and Awards Committee Chair Amb. (ret.) Lange Schermerhorn were also available to answer questions and promote the benefits of AFSA membership. ■



AFSA Outreach Coordinator Catherine Kannenberg (second from right) and Member Services Representative Natalie Cheung (right) sign up Job Search Program graduates as AFSA members.



AFSA USAID Vice President Sharon Wayne (second from left) speaks to JSP graduates at the reception.

## LM Welcomes New Intern

AFSA's Labor Management team is pleased to welcome Denise Taylor as an intern. Denise is a third-year law student who is very excited to be part of AFSA's LM team.

A lifelong native of Virginia, she graduated from the University of Virginia in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in government. Denise is cur-



Denise Taylor.

rently obtaining her J.D. at The George Washington University Law School, where her studies focus on international labor and

international development law.

In her free time, Denise enjoys learning languages and doing stand-up comedy in the D.C. area. ■

## AFSA Staff Changes

### HAIL

Geneve Mantri joins AFSA as a policy analyst with the Professional Policy Issues unit.

He previously served as the nonproliferation manager at U.S. Embassy Chisinau, Moldova, where he dealt with nonproliferation and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) issues. Prior to that, he directed Amnesty International's terrorism and counterterrorism program. Mantri has also served on Senator Richard Lugar's staff as a national security Stimson fellow. He has worked at National Defense University and as a consultant to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

Geneve Mantri.

Nations Development Program and the Carnegie Corporation.

He is married to a Foreign Service officer and in addition to Chisinau, he has worked overseas with the Department of State in Bucharest. He is a graduate of Tufts University's Fletcher

School of Law and Diplomacy and Warwick University in the United Kingdom.

### FAREWELL

We say farewell to Shannon Mizzi, editorial assistant for *The Foreign Service Journal*. After two years with AFSA, she leaves to begin her graduate studies in law and international relations at Georgetown University. We wish her all the best as she embarks on this new and exciting adventure.

### LABOR MANAGEMENT

Congratulations to Raeka Safai on her promotion from AFSA staff attorney to deputy general counsel at AFSA.

We also congratulate Jason Snyder, who has been promoted to grievance counselor from labor management assistant.

And thanks to Zlatana Badrich for her great work as deputy general counsel. She is moving over to a part-time position as an AFSA staff attorney. ■



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

Jason Snyder, Zlatana Badrich and Raeka Safai in the AFSA Labor Management office.

## Diplomats Engage Road Scholars at Lake Chautauqua

In June, as AFSA celebrates its 20th year of collaboration with the Road Scholar lifelong learning organization (formerly known as Elderhostel), six retired diplomats traveled to western New York state to lead adult students through some of the most interesting, often intractable, issues facing the world today.

The joint AFSA-Road Scholar program, "U.S. Foreign Policy for the 21st Century," brought the distinguished diplomats and some 150 participants from all over the country together on the banks of the beauti-

ful Lake Chautauqua, where the venerable Chautauqua Institution, which pioneered adult education in America, has been located since 1874.

The June 5-10 program drew on the experiences of Ambassadors (ret.) Ron Neumann, Al La Porta, Charles Ray and Charles Ford, along with retired Senior FSOs Molly Williamson and James Pierce, who led lectures and lively discussions on global topics.

During 12 lectures across six days, students received a crash course on diplomacy, examining issues from global

terrorism and the Israel-Palestine conflict to the Koreas, China and even the key role that the Foreign Service plays in the U.S. president's travels abroad.

Participants had the opportunity to get to know some of America's leading diplomats not only through daily lectures, but also outside the classroom as lecturers and students dined and enjoyed local entertainment together.

This informal and highly personal experience is furthered by breakout sessions and panel discus-

sions, including the always popular "Spouses Panel," led by the wives and husbands of lecturing diplomats, that touches on the challenges and rewards of the Foreign Service lifestyle.

Participants were also treated to a viewing of the documentary "America's Diplomats," followed by a panel discussion of the film.

AFSA looks forward to continuing this 20-year tradition of providing a unique look behind the scenes of American diplomacy and encourages members to

*Continued on page 69*

## Marine Corps Embassy Security Guards Honored

AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson meets Staff Sergeant Brittany Clayborne. The only female graduate in this detachment commanders' class, Staff Sgt. Clayborne will be posted to Libreville, Gabon.

On July 13, AFSA, DACOR, the American Academy of Diplomacy, the American Foreign Service Protective Association, the Council of American Ambassadors and the Foreign Area Officers Association co-hosted a reception in honor of the detachment commanders of Marine embassy security guards (MESG).

At the event, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson met with the graduates of the most

recent U.S. Marine Corps Embassy Guard Detachment Commanders class and their spouses.

Deployed in more than 120 countries to protect diplomatic facilities and classified information, provide security for visiting dignitaries and, where necessary, protect U.S. citizens in exigent circumstances, MESGs play a vital role in the Department of State's mission. AFSA thanks them for their service. ■

## AFSA Engages Consular Fellows

On July 11, AFSA attended an event on Capitol Hill to promote the Consular Fellows Program. AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson met with participants and discussed the program, language training and employment opportunities with the Department of State.



AFSA/ALLAN SAUNDERS



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

At a luncheon on Aug. 14, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson welcomed members of the 11th Consular Fellows class. Above, AFSA State Representative Erin O'Connor (at left) meets with incoming Consular Fellows at the luncheon.



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

AFSA State Representative John Dinkelman (second from left) speaks to the new Consular Fellows class. A number of AFSA Governing Board members attended the luncheon to provide insight and advice on life in the Foreign Service.

## AFSA Governing Board Changes

AFSA is pleased to welcome three new State representatives to the AFSA Governing Board. They were confirmed by the board April 6. We also welcome Suzanne Platt, confirmed on June 1, as the new Foreign Commercial Service representative.

**Keith Hanigan** is director of the Office of Facility Management in the Overseas Buildings Operations Bureau. A member of the Foreign Service since 1995, Keith has served in San Salvador, Guatemala City, Managua, Brasilia, Vienna, Baghdad, London and Kabul, as well as in Washington, D.C.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Keith worked as an engineer for Turner Construction Company in Boston, as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Solomon Islands and in the Media and Society Seminars Department at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.

Keith speaks Spanish and Portuguese—and usually a mixture of both—and is a native of New Jersey. He and his wife, Silvia, have four

children and live in Northern Virginia.

**Kara McDonald** currently serves as director of policy, planning and coordination in the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. She was most recently deputy chief of mission in Chisinau, Moldova.

Before joining the U.S. Department of State, she was a Presidential Management Fellow at the U.S. Agency for International Development, where she worked in Kosovo, Haiti, Macedonia and Croatia, and as an elections supervisor with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Kara holds a B.A. in French and comparative literature from the University of Michigan and an M.A. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. She speaks or has studied French, Romanian and Russian. She is married and has two children.

**Alison Storsve** joined the Foreign Service in 2003. She has served eight years overseas and five in domestic assignments, most recently

as a program officer covering police development in Haiti in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

Alison has served as a course facilitator in the Foreign Service Institute's Political Training Division and a senior watch officer in the department's Operations Center. She spent five years across three tours covering Afghanistan and Pakistan from the U.S. Mission to NATO in Brussels, Belgium; the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kunar Province, Afghanistan; and the U.S. consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan.

Originally from Ohio, Alison graduated from Ohio State University and is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Turkmenistan 2000-2001). Alison will move with her husband and two children to Kosovo in summer 2017 to be the deputy of the political-economic section at U.S. Embassy Pristina.

**Suzanne Platt** is a U.S. Foreign Commercial Service officer on her first tour of duty in Washington, D.C.,

serving on the Nordic-Baltic desk. Previously she worked in the private sector for more than five years, working for a generic pharmaceutical manufacturer. During that time, she set up a U.S. subsidiary, acted as the company's agent to the Food and Drug Administration, developed new supply and distribution flows into and within the European Union and served as the managing director of a sales marketing subsidiary.

A lover of the arts, she has also worked as a freelance lighting and sound technician. She focused on European political economies at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, where she received an M.A. in international relations. At the University of Virginia, she earned a B.A. in foreign affairs.

We thank outgoing Governing Board members Peter Neisuler, Eric Geeland, Leah Pease and Youqing Ma for their service to AFSA. ■



Keith Hanigan.



Kara McDonald.



Alison Storsve.



Suzanne Platt.



## AFSA Governing Board Meeting Aug. 3, 2016

**Welcome:** AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson welcomed new Governing Board member Keith Hanigan to his first meeting.

**Consent Agenda:** The Governing Board approved the consent agenda items. These items were: (1) the July 6 Governing Board minutes, (2) the appointment of Jay Singh to the USAID Standing Committee, and (3) the ranking of six nominees to the Foreign Service Impasse Disputes Panel.

**Awards and Plaques:** On a motion from AFSA Secretary and Governance Committee Chair Bill Haugh, the board confirmed the establishment of the Awards and Plaques Committee for the remainder of the 2015-2017 term of office. In a related motion, the Governing Board approved a proposed bylaw amendment which would establish the Awards and Plaques Committee as a permanent standing committee pending AFSA membership approval in the next election.

**AFSA Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy:** Governing Board members reviewed the criteria for selection of the recipient of the AFSA Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy.

On a motion from State Vice President Angie Bryan, the Governing Board referred discussion to the Awards and Plaques Committee with the request that they prepare criteria to be approved by the Governing Board in September. ■

Road Scholars  
Continued from page 69

look into visiting the Chautauqua Institution. For more information on Chautauqua, its history and the learning opportunities available, please visit [www.ciweb.org](http://www.ciweb.org).

More on AFSA's programs and course offerings through Road Scholar is available online at [www.afsa.org/roadscholar](http://www.afsa.org/roadscholar). ■

—Allan Saunders,  
Outreach and  
Communications Specialist

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## Adair Lecture: Amb. Stephenson on the Future of Diplomacy

On Aug. 31, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson gave this year's Caroline and Ambassador Charles Adair Memorial Lecture at American University in Washington, D.C.

The Adair Memorial Lecture is co-hosted by AFSA's Fund for American Diplomacy and the School of Professional and Extended Studies at AU.

AFSA thanks Dean Carola Weil and Dr. Christian Maisch for facilitating the event, which took place in packed-to-capacity Kaye Spiritual Life Center on the AU campus.

Made possible by the generous support of former AFSA President Marshall Adair and the Adair family, the lectures—now in their 10th year—are designed to expose students to individuals who have spent their careers practicing diplomacy and thus add practical insights to the students' theoretical studies.

Amb. Stephenson shared her thoughts on the future of diplomacy, saying that she expects the conduct and practice of diplomacy to be very different over the next decades than when she first started her Foreign Service career. This is due to a range of new threats, she explained, that are global in scope and as diverse as collapsing fisheries, rising oceans and epidemic diseases such as Ebola and Zika.

The AFSA president

**Citing several current diplomatic initiatives Amb. Stephenson described how the practice of diplomacy is already being reshaped to prepare for the future.**

emphasized her dedication to ensuring that the next generation of the Foreign Service is equipped to handle these new challenges.

Citing several current diplomatic initiatives, she described how the practice of diplomacy is already being reshaped to prepare for the future. She hailed, for example, the Conference Of Parties 21—the global climate change initiative agreed on in Paris last year—as a bold move toward public problem solving and a key example of stakeholders working together with “traditional” diplomats to address a global problem.

“My central argument is that most of the global challenges ahead will require working with a much broader array of partners than was the case in the past—and a cadre of people prepared to step up and provide the leadership necessary for that effort. People who are comfortable talking about sci-



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson addresses students at the 10th annual Caroline and Ambassador Charles Adair Memorial Lecture.



A student in the school of Professional and Extended Studies at American University asks Amb. Stephenson a question at the Adair Memorial Lecture.

ence, technology, engineering, medicine, transportation, climate science and even social work,” Amb. Stephenson said. “The people I’m describing are you.”

A lively Q&A session followed the lecture, with students from the United States, Egypt, Afghanistan and Japan stepping up to ask

questions about the future of American involvement in the Middle East, engagement of non-state actors in the fight against new threats and Amb. Stephenson’s personal experiences as a U.S. diplomat.

For a video of the event, visit [www.afsa.org/video](http://www.afsa.org/video). ■

—Gemma Dvorak,  
Associate Editor

## Sister Cities International— Creating Peace Through People

On July 15-16, AFSA joined Sister Cities International in celebrating its 60th anniversary and annual conference at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C.

The event drew leaders and representatives from across the United States and around the world into one forum to discuss the connections that help create “Peace Through People.”

Created in 1956 at President Dwight Eisenhower’s White House Summit on Citizen Diplomacy, SCI has been a leading driver of citizen diplomacy for the past 60 years.

With 545 U.S. sister cities, counties and states encompassing 2,121 partnerships in 145 countries and across six continents, it’s fair to say that this organization has fostered people-to-people relationships, literally, around the globe.

AFSA was an exhibitor at the conference, sharing information about AFSA and the Foreign Service with conference-goers as they came through the marketplace.

Among the most popular AFSA programs and activities promoted were the National High School Essay Contest and the Speakers Bureau, as well our publications, *Inside a U.S. Embassy* and *The Foreign Service Journal*.

Participants were eager to learn more about the Foreign Service and how it supports American ideals and interests abroad.

SCI reaches out to U.S. embassies when they need help with a sister-city partnership overseas. SCI is a potential partner in AFSA’s outreach efforts.

With approximately 350 speakers in 35 states, AFSA’s Speakers Bureau is an excellent resource for Sister Cities chapters looking to engage experts on diplomacy and development for local meetings and events.

SCI audiences would get a unique glimpse into the world of diplomacy and come away with greater awareness and appreciation for the work of foreign affairs professionals.

AFSA staff representatives had the opportunity to attend several sessions at the conference, including a panel on “How to Engage the Emerging Generation through International Partnerships” and a session on “Food, Culture, Music and Sports: Diplomacy through Unique Platforms.” ■

—Catherine Kannenberg,  
Outreach Coordinator

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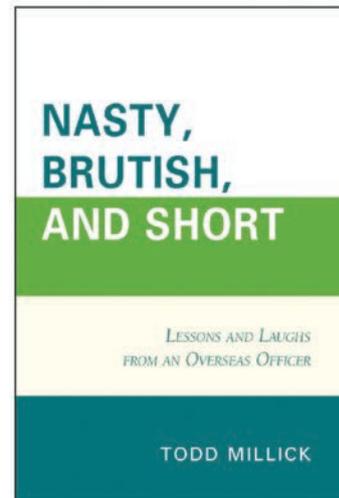
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## The Difference Between Needs and Capacities

### **Minding the Gap: African Conflict Management in a Time of Change**

*Edited by Chester A. Crocker and Pamela Aall, CIGI Press, 2016, \$38/paperback, \$15.38/Kindle, 342 pages.*

REVIEWED BY TIBOR NAGY

Former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker and the founding provost of the U.S. Institute of Peace's Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding, Pamela Aall, are joined by 20 other renowned African scholars in *Minding the Gap* to examine every aspect—past, present and future—of African conflicts and how to resolve them.

The “gap” refers to the difference between the needs and the available resources and capacities—internal, regional, continental and global—to adequately address African conflicts.

This work is most timely because Africa is on the cusp of dramatic change—with rapid urbanization, the fastest-growing population and biggest “youth bulge” in the world, and indications that climate change will be particularly devastating for the continent.

At the same time, though the number of Africa's conflicts continues to shrink, some of the remaining ones seem unending, and new types of combatants such as Boko Haram and al-Shabaab are increasingly significant.

While the book exemplifies the meaning of the term “comprehensive” in its scope and content, the immense richness of data, along with the many examples and case studies, can overwhelm the non-academic reader with the feeling of drinking from a fire hose.

The book first examines the origins, nature, causes and changing dynamics of violent conflicts, and then discusses mitigation efforts by internal and external actors: Africans, individual nations beyond Africa, and the larger global community through international and nongovernmental organizations. It concludes with an excellent summary chapter by the editors, who review the authors' major points and findings.

It would have helped those unfamiliar with the subject if the editors had started the book by highlighting the significant impact of Africa's illogical colonial borders on its current conflicts, both historically and today. Both by splitting individual ethnic groups between states, and combining mutually hostile groups within the same state, the colonizers virtually guaranteed that violence would follow their departure.

Without this fundamental knowledge at the outset, the reader can quickly become lost in Africa's complexities, even when the material is so well articulated by the authors.

Although each author examines different aspects of the topic, there are a number of common threads that run throughout the collection of essays. “African solutions for African problems”—a phrase often spoken by African leaders—is found in several chapters and examined as it relates to such issues as use of African “eminent persons” in resolving conflicts, how international peacekeeping operations use increasing numbers of African troops, and how Africa's own capability for dealing with conflicts has continued to dramatically improve.

Realistically, though, paying to help resolve conflicts remains part of the “gap,”

because almost all such funding continues to come from Western donors.

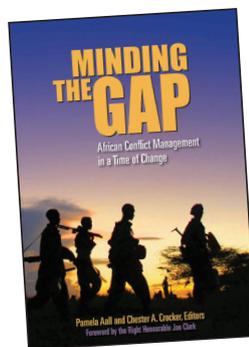
Another recurring theme is the structural tension inherent in addressing conflicts between the competing interests of the United Nations, the African Union, Africa's regional economic communities and individual prominent nations (e.g., the United States, France, Britain).

Besides overlaps and uncertainties concerning what role each should play, there are situations of duplicative and even competing efforts that serve to confuse and open the door to “resolution shopping” by the involved parties.

I saw this firsthand in Ethiopia over many months as mediators from the United States, the European Union, Italy, Algeria and the U.N. literally tripped over each other at Addis Ababa airport trying to end the Ethio-Eritrean War. Despite the incredible effort and duplication of resources, the conflict was only resolved (partially) when Ethiopia defeated Eritrea on the battlefield.

The authors also comment extensively, and at times disagree, on whether the key component in conflict resolution involves addressing the “root causes” or the immediate “triggers”—furnishing excellent points to support both views.

Overall, *Minding the Gap* is a significant contribution to the academic study of African conflicts and will be an excellent textbook for advanced courses on the subject. It is not, however, an easy-to-follow roadmap for practitioners or policymakers seeking to navigate the complexities of the topic.




---

*During 32 years of U.S. government service, Tibor Nagy spent more than 20 years in Afri-*

ca at eight posts—twice as U.S. ambassador (Ethiopia and Guinea) and three times as deputy chief of mission (Nigeria, Cameroon and Togo)—and had to deal with some form of conflict at all of them.

## Déjà Vu All Over Again

### State Capitalism: How the Return of Statism Is Transforming the World

Joshua Kurlantzick, Oxford University Press, 2016, \$29.95/ hardcover, \$9.99/ Kindle, 296 pages.

REVIEWED BY JOSH GLAZEROFF

Economics affects politics. Why? How? These questions are at the heart of this thought-provoking book, as Joshua Kurlantzick takes a global view of government influence on the economy and what it means for policymakers. I recommend the book for those who fear that China's economic—and by extension political—"model" is winning out, or who question how to address Russia's current power plays in Europe.

According to the author, a nation is defined as "state capitalist" if it has government ownership in or significant influence over more than one-third of the 500 largest companies, by revenue, in that country. As Kurlantzick notes: "Generally, in these countries, the government sees itself as having a direct role to play in managing the economy and guiding the corporate sector."

The list, of course, includes China, but extends to Russia, India, Singapore, Vietnam and others; and the total number of countries on it has steadily risen from a low point in the late 1990s—with great impact on the world economy.

Kurlantzick couches his observations in terms of "threats." In countries with state capitalist characteristics, government control of the economy threatens

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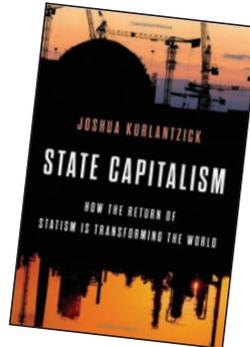
to lead to state control of politics and loss of freedoms.

Argentina under the Kirchners, for example, represented both greater state intervention and an attempt to shift political power to a smaller cadre, often through economic intimidation, as those in opposition-tied media lost revenue from government-controlled businesses. In Thailand, the military regime has taken advantage of its current political power to place military men in leading state companies.

With many developing nations embracing it, state capitalism poses a potential threat to the greater world economy. Malaysia has been an economic success with a state-capitalist strategy historically, but recent stagnation can be tied to burdens placed on state businesses by the government, such as ensuring ethnic Malay ownership. Economic weakness in Malaysia has carryover effects on regional and global economic trends. The corruption uncovered at Petrobras in Brazil has had a devastating impact there, with an economic recovery nowhere in sight.

The greatest threat comes from Russia and China, where state-owned businesses become tools of warfare employed against neighboring nations and entire regions. In Russia's case, the use of state-controlled Gazprom as a weapon of intimidation is well known.

Cutting off gas supplies to Ukraine at critical times in the mid-2000s and 2010s sent a clear message of Russia's interests. Gazprom has done the same with Georgia, as well. Both Ukraine and Georgia have dealt just as much with



military pressure; all tools have been blended together in Russia's hybrid warfare model.

Kurlantzick does not question state capitalism's success in China, or China's concomitant building of strategic power. He cites the example of Chinese state oil and gas companies sending rigs into parts of the South China Sea claimed by Vietnam as part of a larger Chinese strategy to extend influence in the area, including with the building of airstrips and patrolling by naval vessels.

Do we combat state capitalism, or just talk about it? Should one model prevail? These are questions for the thoughtful reader.

Kurlantzick makes his views clear: "State companies are not going away. Western multinationals should understand the areas where they still retain advantages over most state firms and ignore the idea of trying to beat state capitalists at their own games."

He reminds observers to focus on the people of these countries, because over the long term their governments require public legitimacy and won't get away with mismanagement. He then asks the rest of the world to keep an eye on a list of key countries where political freedom is under threat: Thailand, South Africa, Ukraine and others.

We in the United States can play a role in fostering democratic change, but only by recognizing and understanding the challenges significant state interventions pose. ■

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*Josh Glazeroff is a Foreign Service officer who has served in Santo Domingo, Durban, New Delhi and Washington, D.C. He previously served on the FSJ Editorial Board and is a current member of the AFSA Governing Board.*

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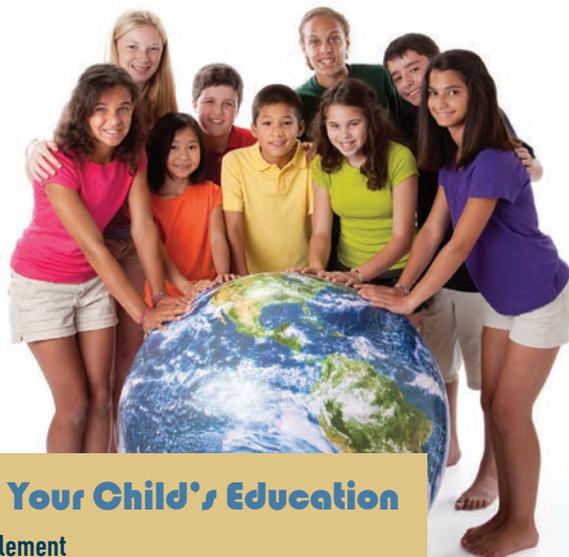
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# Halloween at a Polish Cemetery

BY KELLY B. MIDURA



Halloween overseas can be tricky. While many countries have adopted the American-style trick-or-treating tradition, at most posts you can't just put your kid in a pillowcase with eyeholes, hand him a plastic pumpkin and send him out to bother the neighbors.

So Americans in foreign countries improvise. Since our little spooks are now in college, and we had no need to haunt anyone, we naturally decided to spend Halloween at our current post, Warsaw, in a cemetery!

Poles celebrate the Slavic Zaduszki, observed on the Catholic All Saints' Day, Nov. 1. Like Halloween's precursor, the Celtic Samhain, Zaduszki is rooted in the pre-Christian belief that the dead wander the world at this time of year. In this tradition, Oct. 31 is not a day of silly costumes and raucous celebration, but one of busy preparation to receive visiting spirits.

In earlier centuries, Slavic peoples cleaned and prepared their homes to receive visiting ancestors on Zaduszki, leaving offerings of bread and water for them by the hearth. And they took similar offerings to the cemeteries, a practice that has survived to this day.



*Kelly Bembry Midura has accompanied FSO Christopher Midura to seven posts in Latin America, Africa and Europe. She blogs about her adventures at [wellthatwasdifferent.com](http://wellthatwasdifferent.com).*

Zaduszki is an official church and state holiday in Poland—and a major national event. Millions of Poles hit the roads to visit their ancestors' graves, resulting in traffic jams and a spike in accidents despite special bus routes set up to accommodate pilgrims.

We had heard that the Polish graveyards are a must-see for the three days starting Oct. 31, so on Halloween we made our way to Wilanów Cemetery on the outskirts of Warsaw.

There crowds of people were busy sweeping and scrubbing elaborately carved tombstones until they shone in the pale northern afternoon sun. Many of the large marble family vaults were completely covered in flowers, candles and Catholic knick-knacks sold by "pop-up" vendors on surrounding streets.

It was clear who is in charge of maintaining tradition: We saw many a stern *babcia* (grandmother) directing a harassed-looking husband or several adult children in proper tomb-cleaning technique.

Polish cemeteries are, in fact, ruled by old ladies: I have never passed a graveyard here without seeing several *babcias* strolling around or tidying family grave sites.

This being Warsaw, the shadow of World War II is always present. A large section of Wilanów Cemetery is devoted to the thousands of Poles who died in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. These graves were

also fully decorated. In fact, it is customary to take care of *all* the graves in a cemetery on Zaduszki, so that even those souls without relatives in attendance are not forgotten.

Monuments to Polish victims of the Nazis are not confined to cemeteries, but are found throughout the city. Most boast a bouquet or candle; but for Zaduszki, they all get a full cleaning and are elaborately decorated.

Nov. 1 is a festival of sorts. Whatever a visiting family might require at any cemetery is provided by the same pop-up street vendors, whose inventory includes everything from grilled *kielbasa* to toys for entertaining tired children.

Families visit and picnic around their family vaults. It reminds me of the annual family reunions I attended in the American South as a child—but with both living and dead kinfolk welcome.

Most Poles return to work the next day, but the hundreds of thousands of candles remain lit for three nights, through All Souls' Day on Nov. 2. The cemeteries are so bright that a glow can be seen on the horizon when approaching them.

As the chilly October evening fell at Wilanów Cemetery, it became a truly beautiful and mysterious place: alight with candles and crowded with visitors praying and conversing in hushed tones.

Quite a contrast to our own Halloween tradition, it was an experience I feel very lucky to have had. ■



A man plays a tune on a colorful street piano on a summer day in Des Moines, Iowa. After spending more than two decades exploring other cultures and countries, I have begun to explore the diverse cultures across the United States. I first discovered “Play Me, I’m Yours” pianos in Portland, Oregon, where street pianos were placed around the city for anyone to play. Local artists painted the pianos to reflect their unique areas. Later, coming across this Des Moines pianist connected the two very different cities, reminding me that despite our many differences, we are still all one nation. ■

*Beth Payne retired from the Foreign Service in September as a Minister Counselor. She joined the Foreign Service in 1993 and served overseas in Kuwait, Israel, Rwanda, Senegal, Iraq and India. In Washington, D.C., she served as director of the Bureau of Consular Affairs’ Office of Child Issues and as associate dean of the Foreign Service Institute’s School of Professional and Area Studies. She takes up her new position as director of the FSI Transition Center’s Center of Excellence in Foreign Affairs Resilience in October and has volunteered as chair of the FSJ Editorial Board since July 2015. She took this photo with a Canon 7D.*

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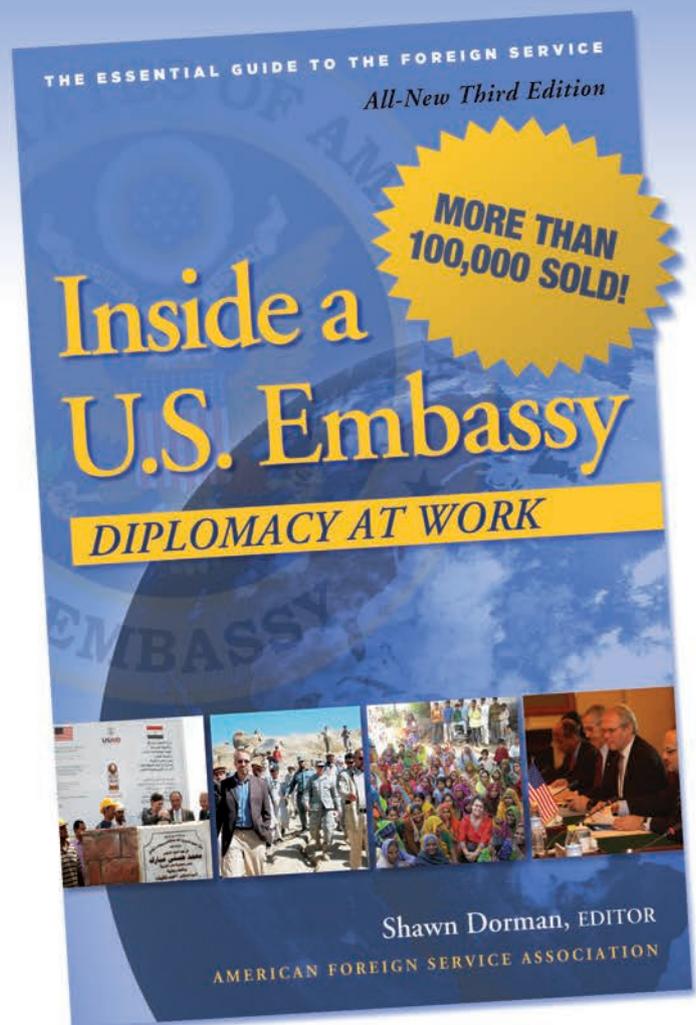
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